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OUT OF TOWN;

OR,

THE RECESS.

OUT OF TOWN;

OR,

THE RECESS.

OUT OF TOWN;

OR,

THE RECESS.

CONTAINING

PASSAGES OF THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF ARTHUR MELMONT.

This above all—to thine own self be true.
HAMLET.

Ridentis speciem dabit et torquebitur idem.
HORACE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO THE

COUNT RODOLFE ST. EVREMONT,

CHEVALIER OF THE ORDER OF ST. LOUIS,

&c. &c. &c.

OF MONT EVREUX, LANGUEDOC.

MY DEAR ST. EVREMONT,

THOUGH *you* may have forgotten it, *I* cannot forget the period that we passed together in your visit to England some few years back: not the least agreeable portion of the time was the period, during the "Recess," that we stayed at Cheltenham and Leamington, amongst other places (to avoid the cholera), in the progress of our tour through this island. The sketch I amused myself with taking at the time, of some of the

"drolls and bores"—the characters, more or less, fallen in with at these scenes of public resort, I promised, according to your request long ago, to send you over to Languedoc, to amuse my fair friend Eugénie—(perhaps with a sprinkling, here and there, of more serious reflection); but ill health, —and the more urgent diplomatic engagements that, as you are aware, occupy me,—have occasioned the delay; to make amends for which, I have endeavoured to show you some diligence in making considerable additions to my first sketch; and, in fact,

the somewhat romantic life of our Genoese friend, under the name of Gustavo. Let me hope, then, that by this humble effort to amuse yourself and Eugénie in an idle hour or two, by bringing back your recollections to England, and some scenes we traced in it together, I may be allowed to atone for my past apparent negligence, and more particularly to assure you.

Of my being, ever,

My dear St. Evremont,

Your faithful and affectionate Friend.

P. S.—You will recognise in Sir Jasper Lentworth the genuine "Anglois," and portrait of our "bluff" hospitable friend in the North; and, pray, if you catch me quizzing, be assured, it is all good-humouredly.

OUT OF TOWN;

OR,

THE RECESS.

CHAPTER I.

OUR HERO QUITS TOWN FOR THE COUNTRY, BEGINNING WITH PHILOSOPHICAL REASONS FOR THIS DETERMINATION.

And sick of all the din and hum of life,
I leave behind the city and its strife, ...
. . . . Howe'er by force you drive Dame Nature out,
Still she returns.

FRANCIS, from HORACE.

"WAS there ever such a riddle as mortal man? He has, through a course of ages, rescued himself from savageness, to find his best relief

and pleasure,—— where?—why, in a relapse from the forms of artificial life, into the very freedom, the very independence of social restraint, which characterises savage nature!"... Such were the thoughts uttered by Arthur Melmont, as he was pacing up and down the room considering where he should go to recruit, after the fatigues of the season and the "business of society," and rusticate during the "Recess."..... He continued in the vein of thought just now expressed, and gave scope to

nor does he so, without feeling this revolution, or re-action, his truest delight. . . . Extremes meet, here, indeed! 'Human nature will be human nature still!' The beast, however reclaimed, too soon recognises the forest and the wild, as the sphere congenial to its disposition, if turned loose from its cage: and so, the animal, Man! . . . ." He paused a moment, and then pursued a little further. "Again, by throwing off awhile the shackles of social restraint, man learns from nature, that he brings back greater vigour with him to the duties of life, as though he had imbibed it in an atmosphere where he most truly owned his springs of vitality and action! The man of the world (even the most devotedly so), if he is a being not merely inane — if he has any of the 'dignity of man' about him—is glad at times to stand alone, to think by and with himself—to turn his back on

the giddy crew—the false and the flattering—the whirl of gaiety, rendered wearisome by the frequency of its recurrence—to tear off his lace ruffles and embroidered Court frippery, and put on the rustic garb—to shut his ears against the din, the clamour and the bustle of the mighty Babel—to fly from the strife of its wide contending arena—the bewildering scene of human action and human passion." . . . .How much further our hero might have indulged in his soliloquy we cannot determine, had not the question that had given rise to it been determined, by his eye having accidentally glanced at an announcement in the newspaper, that Miss Lentworth, with her parents, Sir Jasper and Lady Lentworth, had recently arrived at Cheltenham. To Cheltenham, therefore, he took not a moment further in deciding to go. Perhaps other feelings than merely those of

escaping from the din of the town, induced him to bend his route in that direction—feelings, perhaps, of interest—perhaps worthier feelings than this; whatever they might be, we cannot as yet decide: meantime, he rang the bell hurriedly, which summons was quickly answered by a French valet, who had returned with Melmont from Paris the last time he had gone thither.

"Early to-morrow, Fleuret, I set off: let the horses be at the door by one o'clock, at furthest."

"Then, sir, you do not wait to dine at Mr. G——'s to-morrow?"

"Oh, I had forgot Mr. G——'s party—no, no, I can't stay; I must send an excuse."

"Then, sir," continued the officious valet, "Monsieur will be pleased to remember that the coachmaker was to call to-morrow—about the cab."

"Oh, pooh, pooh, the cab!—let the man drive off in it, if he pleases: I can't wait."

"Then, sir, there was a small account to settle."

"Small account—great nuisance!—who is to wait for these trumpery matters? the man should have called about his account sooner."

"Only monsieur will be pleased to remember, he had fixed to-morrow for the day——"

"Nonsense, 'fixed!'—there is nothing fixed in this world, except uncertainty!—I'll settle the matter when I return—meantime, I'm 'out of town,'—and nothing shall keep me any longer in it."

It were difficult to say, with how many more pleasurable remembrances of engagements of a "thousand and one" descriptions, the sedulous valet continued to refresh his master's memory, as arguments for the necessity of a delay of a day, according to his own previous intentions;

but no such remembrances were of avail; Melmont's resolve was, at present, as fixed as the laws of the Medes and Persians, and, unshaken as a rock, he felt no inkling of compassion for any suitors for payment, whose long visages on the melancholy chance of ever being paid, had grown longer for some little time past; neither these pictures of despair, nor any other inducements availed to check his progress, which was biassed as strongly in the direction of Cheltenham, as if he had been forthwith impelled by a forty-horse-power of steam. So, the next morning, no small expedition was used in passing the "Rubicon" at once—the carriage steps once stepped on, away he might fly, turning his back on the town and the *désagrémens* of those various annoyances attached to it, by way of a "set off" to its pleasures.

"Is the carriage ready, Fleuret?" said our

hero, breakfast being now over; "every thing put up?—I am quite ready, and anxious to set off."

"Every thing, Sir; but here is a card just left——"

"Oh, I can't attend to it; say I'm 'out of town'—'out of town.'"

"Here is a letter, too, Sir——"

"Throw it into the fire!—'out of town'—can't attend to it."

"Then there's the coachmaker actually down stairs——"

unfortunate coachmaker. To all these, "out of town" was the universal answer, and "discharge in full;" and as to any cards, bills, or letters, that happened to be left at the present moment, the "fire" was referred to as the best place to dispose of them, or throw light on them; and thus, flinging his cloak over him, and alternately uttering the responses, to his valet's "please to remember," of—"out of town!" and "fling it into the fire!" Arthur Melmont made his escape into the carriage, and bid, for the present, farewell to town. The poor coachmaker, who had been kept back by Fleuret, came just in time to see Mr. Melmont—not quite "out of sight," as the Irishman said, but out of reach—and his chance of being set at rest in his demands, put off *sine die*.

CHAPTER II.

SHOWING HOW OUR HERO DID NOT GO IN PRECISELY THE DIRECTION HE HAD INTENDED IN THE PRECEDING CHAPTER.

his retreat: Melmont called out to him, to know "who he was;" but the man was gone. He now looked at the note, ordering the servant at the same time to bid the postilion drive on. The note ran as follows:—

"Unless you delay your departure, and submit to the proposition I made you on our last meeting, dread the consequences! your ruin is inevitable! My power over your fortunes is indisputable: on your acquiescence, you shall have sufficient to enable you to live as you would wish, but on your refusal—expect no compunction on my part. You know where to find me;—once more, be advised!

"LA MARRE."

"Never," said Melmont, indignantly, "will I give way to threats—I despise your malevolence! do your worst! ruin me if you can! but I defy you to do so—what controul have

you over my fortunes....?" Saying this, Melmont crumpled up the note, and thrust it into his breast-pocket.

However, as he considered, on second thoughts, that it was as well to know the worst of the evil it was possible for the person, who had addressed the above note to him, to do, he resolved on seeking him out, and hearing what he had to say; for although the note alluded to certain propositions of signing a deed which would give up considerable property to Count

business called him away for two or three hours, that, on his return, he should continue his journey, and that the carriage should take him up at the Hotel where he now stopped. Accordingly he set out in quest of his mysterious correspondent, who seemed to be perfectly apprised of his movements, by his having found out he was about to leave town. The very feeling that there were spies on his actions was irksome enough to urge Melmont to meet his persecutor, and endeavour to put a stop, if possible, to any further watch on his conduct, if not to get rid of persecution in other respects. It was scarcely mid-day: there were few people stirring in the quarter of the town to which Melmont was now obliged to direct his steps. The day being gloomy and chill for the season, there were fewer persons out than usual, and in the bye-streets through

which our hero now made his way, there was scarcely a soul to be seen: the region was that "*terra incognita*," where thieves and villains make their skulking place, situated behind Long Acre on the north side. "A strange place," thought Melmont, "for the 'Count La Marre,' —as he calls himself,—to take up his quarters!"

He had been informed by the Count himself of the way he was to take to arrive at this recondite dwelling, on a previous occasion; but, in spite of these instructions, he began to despair of finding the house he was in quest of, when suddenly he saw a ruffian-like looking figure before him, whom he recognised as the person who had thrust the note in at the carriage window: this worthy was not to be encountered, in a solitary spot, without exciting sensations not best calculated to assure one of the safety of one's purse or person.

The eye of Melmont encountering that of the man, he asked him the way to Count La Marre's; the man acquiesced with a sort of assumed civility, that was evidently not agreeable to the natural savageness of his disposition, which was testified fully in the stern brutal expression of his features; as to his appearance, otherwise, he was muffled up to the throat in a sort of dingy shag drab great coat, a red worsted wrapper enveloped his throat, for which a halter appeared the most appropriate investment, and a great broad-brimmed hat, worn slouched over his forehead, completed the *tout ensemble* of this London ruffian. Melmont, naturally courageous, and fond withal of adventure, (though on contemplating the figure before him more closely he could not altogether check certain misgivings he had as to trusting himself in his company,) soon stifled all

apprehensions, and desired the man to lead the way to the Count's, his master's or employer's, whichever it might be. The guide proceeded in silence, and after two or three turnings and windings down some narrow streets, he suddenly plunged into an ill looking alley, scarcely wide enough for two to walk abreast; after passing through this, they came upon a street, at the end of which was the dwelling in request. "There," said the man pointing to it, "is the house I'm going to

hibited those strange clumsy features of architecture prior to, or coeval with Anne's time; the massive capitals of the old doorway, the corresponding massive cornice that hung over the huge framework of the windows and ran along underneath the eaves of the roof — the whole front of the house tended to attract the observation of the stranger. It seemed utterly deserted; all the windows were blocked up with boards, except one or two of the upper ones, which exhibited an old frame of glass, consisting of those little obscure diamond panes, invented more (it should seem) to distort and confound the light, than to admit its clear translucent flood to enlighten and enliven the dwelling they were the aperture to; no householder ("ten-pounder" or of any other description) appeared to dwell there. The house was utterly different from those on

either side of it: it was said by the inhabitants near it, that it was the property of Chancery, and that no one could touch it or enter it; no one knew who had been the last owner—all they knew was, that a certain lady of the name of Dame or Lady Hatton, had once resided in it, and that after her death it had been deserted: it was added also, that it was haunted —a reputation which, once attached to it, the worthy dwellers about did not at all desire setting about to disprove: none cared to make the experiment of meeting her ladyship's figure after it had once taken its departure for the "other country;" for that such figure *did* occasionally visit the spot they all asserted. It was indeed true, that very strange noises, screams, and cries were occasionally heard faintly to echo from it—at midnight chiefly—but at uncertain intervals. Such were the

stories told of this mysterious abode, to the threshold of which Melmont had now arrived, preceded by his guide, who, drawing from his pocket a huge rusty key as big as that with which St. Peter is represented (but unlike that, opening the door of no heavenly abode) he turned it slowly and with difficulty in the lock; after several efforts it heaved back the reluctant and ponderous bolt, and, this accomplished, Geoffry (such was this turnkey's name) said in a gruff, low tone,—"it's done now—pass on." Melmont accordingly pursued his way from the door into the midst of a spacious hall, the ceiling of which was of carved oak; to a sight of this he was admitted by the dim and melancholy ray of a huge iron lamp that descended from the centre. Geoffry, having locked the door again, took up a smaller lamp that stood in one of the recesses of the

windows, and turning round to Melmont and bidding him follow him up a spacious stone staircase, wide enough to have permitted an "omnibus" and half, if not two abreast, to have driven up it, they proceeded to find out the master or occupier of this mysterious abode.

CHAPTER III.

THE INTERVIEW.

I don't know what you may call yourself, but methinks thou art but a demirep of a gentleman after all.

THE HUMOURS OF A HALF-PAY CAPTAIN.

WHEN they reached the top of the staircase, our hero expected to see his guide usher him into one of the rooms, the doors of which opened on the landing-place; but, instead of this, Geoffry proceeded along a lobby that led to the back of the building, and showed it

to be of considerable extent. It did not escape Melmont's observation, from this circumstance, that whatever was the calling of the "Count," it was plain he liked the retirement of the back part of the house, rather than divest the front part of its appearance of desertion.

Whilst Melmont was conjecturing what all this could mean, they came to the end of the lobby, and Geoffry knocking twice at the door, was answered by a voice from within. Obeying the summons, and bidding his follower

place, so different from the appearance of the rooms (as far as he could judge from the gloom and desertion) in front part of the house. He was now in a splendid salon, furnished with all the characteristics of modern refinement and luxury. What did not escape his observation, however, on an ottoman in a corner of the room, he saw two or three masks and cloaks, which gave him (we may suppose) to understand, that the Count was fond of masquerade; whether of a masquerade ball or a drama of some other description, it is not our present purpose to inquire. Occupied with these thoughts, Melmont was looking about him when the "Count" entered. He bowed stiffly to Melmont, who returned his salute as coldly; the Count drew a chair towards the table, near which Melmont was sitting, and was about to commence speaking after two or three prelimi-

nary hems, when our hero anticipated him and commenced the parley.

"This note," said he, showing the Count the paper that had come to his hand so strangely in the carriage—"this note is couched in terms that I do not understand, and will be obliged to you to explain their meaning a little more fully."

"I thought," said the Count, who was a kind of Macheath in his appearance, only more sinister-looking and artful;—*au reste*, he was whiskered and buttoned up to the throat in a

"By what authority, or on what grounds do you demand this?" interrupted Melmont.

"To repay me my own! Was not your father deeply indebted to me? Did he not, on his death-bed, make acknowledgments to me for my services to him and the assistance I afforded him? Is it too little to be repaid this——"

"Smooth and plausible language this indeed!" replied Melmont. "I regret much, my father was for many years towards the close of his life so little capable of transacting his own affairs; it was the sure way to throw him into the hands of designing and rapacious persons."

"These are insinuations," rejoined the Count, "which I do not merit. Was I not always a friend of the late Mr. Melmont?"

"Ay, a friend, truly! a little too close a one perhaps!—The obligations you say he was under to you, I must beg leave to deny. That he

asked your advice, that you were a good deal —ay, too much, about him—I am well aware; but, whether you took advantage of his confidence, or really advised him for the best, both for his interests and mine, as his heir, I leave you to settle with your conscience; but I have little hesitation in deciding myself."

"Mr. Melmont, I see it is useless protracting our parley. I can do little with you by gentle remonstrance; therefore, to come to the point, will you sign this paper, by which the estate

know, once for all, I will not sign any paper making over to you any property of mine."

"Then, Sir, as I cannot get you to be reasonable by fair means——"

"You will make a vain effort to do so by foul——you had better say——"

"A vain effort!" said La Marre, his countenance wearing a diabolical smile of assurance, "vain, you say—it is time then I should inform you, as you will not make restitution of what is fairly mine—I must show you that it is out of your power to withhold it——"

"I laugh at you," interrupted Melmont.

"I say it is out of your power to withhold it, therefore prepare to vacate the property you call yours. The estates, both here and in France, are mine!"

"Atrocious insolence! do not provoke me much more!" cried Melmont.

"Foolish boy," rejoined the Count, still wearing a calm countenance in which lurked the very spirit of accomplished scoundrelism, "can your hasty and intemperate assertions gainsay the written determination of your father's will."

"Villany!" cried Melmont; "my 'father's will!' it was always understood his sudden death had prevented his making any disposition of his affairs; and I, by right of inheritance, hold his estates."

"Were you present at his death, pray?" asked the Count sneeringly; "were you in France at the time?"

"This is mere fictitious corroboration of a false assertion; but I will hold no longer parley with you, villain—" (here Melmont was surprised by a sudden shout of laughter, and other noises, which appeared to proceed from some apartment below that in which this interview

took place, as if he had been over the roof of Pandæmonium, during a carousal of the devil gentry)—when, recovering from his surprise, he continued: "your threats I defy—do your worst: could you even strip me of every farthing I have in the world, I fear not, the result will be your own discomfiture; the mere proposition you made me was sufficient to prove to me you are a scoundrel. You call yourself the 'Count La Marre,' what you really are it is impossible for me precisely to determine; but, be assured, no honourable man would skulk from the light of day in such a fastness as this house. I have nothing more to say to you—you have my answer. I defy you!" Saying which, he left the room, La Marre standing perfectly unconcerned, with the same smile of calm villanous assurance, not considering it worth his while to be concerned at Melmont's reproaches, as if he was

certain of the success of his designs, and regarded the anger of his victim as a fowler does the struggles of a bird he has safe in his net.

Melmont, on leaving the room, and coming out into the lobby, perceived his guide ready to conduct him back, but it was not by the way which he had entered. Before they had gone half way down the lobby, Geoffry descended a small narrow staircase, and bade him follow: he did so, though not without some apprehension that possibly this ruffian was about to

followed his guide. The sounds appeared to proceed from some spot on a level with the descent at which he now was; when Geoffry hastening him from the direction in which they were, led him along a vault * or arched gallery, lighted at intervals with lamps of iron, and along this they proceeded. Melmont thought, as they passed a door in the vault, he heard—sounds far different from the discord before mentioned—the sounds of music, and a voice accompanying it: he could not stop to listen—the voice seemed that of a female. Geoffry hurried him on, till at last they arrived at a sort of screen of old hurdles, boards, and other lumber, which Geoffry having removed, he bade Melmont pass on, and after proceeding about twenty paces, unlocked an iron grating, or grated

* The curious subterraneous passages that exist in this neighbourhood will be spoken more of hereafter.

door, and bidding him pursue his way straight down an alley in front, and then turn to the right, which would conduct him to the better known avenues of the town, he left him, slamming the grated door, locking it, and hastening back through the vault.

Melmont, in the meantime, having at length extricated himself from the villanous labyrinth he was obliged to wade through, at last arrived at the —— Hotel, where he had ordered the carriage to be waiting for him: it had been

CHAPTER IV.

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES.

Exemplified in the portrait of an old English country gentleman, with a picture of an "old establishment."

Assume a virtue if you have it not.

SHAKSPEARE.

IT was a short time previously to the magnanimous resolve of Melmont, in our opening chapter, that the circumstances of the chapter which is now immediately to follow took place. We mentioned there, that a newspaper statement

that the 'Lentworths' had moved their quarters to a place well known by *ci-devant jeunes hommes* and old invalids, called Cheltenham, had induced Melmont to repair thither also, above all other places in the world—not so much to drink the waters, or pace up and down the walks of the Montpellier Spa, as to refresh the agreeable recollections he entertained of good old acquaintances, to say nothing about pretty young ones. Alice Lentworth had not been forgotten; and this brings us to the mention of the family of

that the 'Lentworths' had moved their quarters to a place well known by *ci-devant jeunes hommes* and old invalids, called Cheltenham, had induced Melmont to repair thither also, above all other places in the world—not so much to drink the waters, or pace up and down the walks of the Montpellier Spa, as to refresh the agreeable recollections he entertained of good old acquaintances, to say nothing about pretty young ones. Alice Lentworth had not been forgotten; and this brings us to the mention of the family of which she was a member.

"Give no credit to appearances—*fronti nulla fides*," was the injunction of the old adage: not so was it with the worthy personage to be introduced to the reader, Sir Jasper Lentworth; *his* practice was to attach all importance to them, and his favourite maxim to "keep up appearances" under all circumstances! This

rule of conduct he cited with a greater or less degree of humorous gravity, as the subject admitted: which of the two maxims he really felt to be true it is not worth while to inquire. Was it not known that in times past an acquaintance with the "turf" had occasioned certain inroads on the substance of his affairs?—was it not true that, in consequence of this, a regard for external show was necessary to supply, in some particulars, the deficiency?—If *so*, it is reasonable to suppose that Sir Jasper did not entirely discredit the truth of the older maxim: however, he held out resolutely for the maintenance of his own; and certainly, no one who visited the hospitable threshold of Lentworth Castle, and looked into the good-humoured "bluff" countenance of its possessor, had cause to complain that he was disappointed in the appearances by which good cheer was promised

in the one instance, and a good heart in the other.

The castle (so most of the old mansions in the North are called) was situated some few miles westward of the romantic mountain tract about Borrodaile, in Cumberland; and it was one evening in July, on the lawn in front of the house (which was now gilded over by the beams of sunset), that Sir Jasper and Lady Lentworth were engaged in the following dialogue, in which they were joined by their only daughter Alice, now in the meridian of youth and beauty.

"I wish, Sir Jasper," said Lady L., "you would make up your mind about going to Cheltenham this summer: you really should do so; you were advised to drink the waters, and the summer is slipping away without our stirring from home."

"The pilgrimage is such a formidable one

from these distant holds in the North!" replied Sir Jasper; "why, with pack and baggage, and the live lumber of servants, it is as serious as a pilgrimage to the Holy Land was in times past!"

"It is troublesome, certainly, but still you ought to go,—your health requires it; and as the weather is fine, suppose we fix at once on going."

"Yes, papa, you really should think of your health, and go at once!" said Alice, adding her voice for making the expedition; and who so far from thinking it troublesome, was very glad of the prospect of an emancipation from what she considered the monotony of Lentworth.

"What, Alice!" said Sir Jasper, smiling, "you actually yawn at the 'romantic sublimity of your native wilds,' as our former neighbours, the Bards of the Lake, would say. Dreadful! what would they have thought of such a lack of

inspiration? . . . . Well, I suppose we must set out . . . . We are sure to fall in with some friends at Cheltenham; and, who knows? we may meet some of your old admirers, Alice—Melmont amongst the rest of them."

"I scarcely think he would remember me," replied Alice, smiling; "I don't think he ever saw me above once or twice."

"Are you speaking of the son of your late old friend, Mr. Melmont?" asked Lady L.

"Yes: he has been anxious to get into Parliament; and I see, after a good deal of speechifying and spending money, he has lost his election."

"Was it his speech you showed me the other day?" asked Alice; "it was very clever!"

"Yes, it was; and indeed a clever harangue; but mere waste of breath in this instance,—and, what is worse, waste of money!"

"Which he could not have found too convenient, I fancy?" inquired Lady L.

"No, I fancy not: the family has burdened itself a good deal with election and other expenses for two or three generations past; but all this is necessary—the 'family name' requires it; appearances must be kept up; and young Melmont did so in this late affair famously!"

"Rather an expensive taste!" said Lady L., who might be permitted to speak feelingly on the subject, since she understood what Sir Jasper had himself adventured, in this and other ways, with the same spirited propensity.

"Oh! it can't be helped! consider the family name!—Well, young Melmont gained laurels for it on the hustings; he made as many speeches as some members (decent speakers, too) do in a whole session; and as for oratory, he

'thundered and lightened' (as he would say) like Pericles himself."

"Well, Sir Jasper, do let us talk more of this expedition."

"Ay, what appearance shall *we* make here? certes, my mind misgives me!—The old travelling carriage is somewhat too respectable—from its years—to display . . . This comes of my being an old-fashioned country gentleman! All my furniture and other lumber is a century behind hand!"

"What is to be done?" said Lady L., amused at the difficulty; "the new britchka, though it has been ordered now some time, will not be finished perhaps these two months."

"The carriage is indeed an antiquity, papa," said Alice, "and fitter for a museum than any other place; but surely it will serve its purpose till we get to Cheltenham; the new

one ought to be finished by the time of our arrival, and can be sent down to us there—what say you?"

"I scarce know what to say," said Sir Jasper, with a humorous gravity; "however, I will write up to town, and order them to have the new one finished and sent down, as you suggest; meantime, Alice, think you that we can have this 'family piece' of a vehicle brushed up so as to make it decent enough for the journey?"

"Oh yes, certainly!" Alice replied, anxious to overcome every obstacle that seemed likely to prevent her escape for a time from the Lentworth solitudes.

"That charming piece of furniture should certainly more properly be kept undisturbed at home, as an heirloom," said Lady L., laughing, "which would be 'keeping up appearances' in the best way, Sir Jasper;—but still I think

we may manage to get through the journey with it."

"Well, then, it seems this item out of the list of difficulties is settled," said Sir J., with an air of mock triumph. "Next comes the item of horses: you know I have, at this moment, scarcely one fit to exhibit at all, except just about my own grounds, where there is little need to be particular as to 'appearances,' for who ever sees me?—Here is the mischief of living in such an out-of-the-way place as we do, and so much by ourselves, '*solus cum solâ*,' as Dryden's fable has it."

"Our stud is certainly not Arabian—not of the finest description," said Lady Lentworth, with her wonted good-humoured carelessness of manner; for she never made herself unnecessarily uncomfortable about anything, despite the various inconveniences always attached, more or

less, to old and out-of-the-way places, such as Lentworth; for the place itself required repair, and the establishment was, in some respects, much in character, that is to say, admitted much room for improvement. Though naturally inclined to be somewhat of a "fine lady," Lady L. was much too good-humoured to be over fastidious or otherwise than amused at the present domestic dilemma.

"You amuse yourself with making difficulties, papa," said Alice. "Who, pray, ever scrutinises, so rigidly, what one has? As for the horse you gave me to ride on, it is beautiful, and would do for a very palfrey of romance! You can use this, if your own horses are not showy enough to please you."

"I certainly might, on occasions, make Fairy do duty for me, though I do not think Fairy would much admire the change, seeing that I

am about ten times the weight of its mistress; however, we must make an effort towards all proper appearances. Ahem! then, what a set of clodpole domestics we are blessed withal! forced, as we are, to break the sons of our tenants into the mystery of footmanship—rub the husk off them till we go to town,—and then, the varlets consorting with the more initiated coxcombs of the footman community, get utterly spoiled as tractable domestics, forget their humbler and more proper notions, demand an unconscionable increase of wages, and move off, in order to 'better themselves!'.....that hobnail Toby! we can never take him with us!"

"He will surely do, papa! He is a very decent lad: he was the last, was he not, you took——?"

"From the plough-tail, my dear——"

"Oh! he waits much more quietly than he

did, and will do well enough to take to Cheltenham!"

"Well, I think, with a new livery, he may save appearances; except, that he must get rid of that Arcadian habit of putting his paws up to his head, and stroking down those carrotty locks of his, whenever one asks him to do any thing, just as he used to do at the plough, while he answers, 'Yiz, an' please you, Sir.' This we must break him of; as for the other knaves, they are a little, though not much, better."

"Take old Newlands," said Alice; "I am sure his grey head is enough to give an appearance of respectability to any establishment, and will more than compensate for the clownishness of Toby, and his smooth carrotty locks."

"I fear we should get rid of poor Newlands before we got rid of our journey," said Lady L.; "he is too infirm to bear the fatigue of such a

long expedition, not to forget the discipline of jolting, till we get beyond our own mountains."

"I think we must leave Newlands behind; nay, it is but fair, in going such a distance, as it appears to be from an out-of-the-way place like ours, to leave him as a pledge of our return (considering him one of the family), by way of appeasing our household gods! And, now then, Alice," continued Sir Jasper, smiling, "having gone through the catalogue of carriage, horses, and servants, I must e'en come to myself! Am *I* fit to appear in the civilised world, after such a long rustication amongst my own 'dirty acres,' and these 'tarns' and hills of Cumberland? Verily, I have seen nothing but peasants and cattle for these six weeks, which, without one's club, and the constant 'business of society,' seems an age! and I almost wonder I have not undergone some Ovidian

metamorphosis into a faun or satyr, with hoofs and horns! What appearance shall *I* hope to make, eh? shall you be ashamed of me, as a chaperon?"

Alice laughed, and replied, "That the only way to shake off the rust complained of, was to get into a more civilised scene as soon as this could be managed;" so that, after sundry other pleasantries on the occasion, the departure from Lentworth was settled to take place within a few days, much to Alice's content.

CHAPTER V.

CHELTENHAM—THE PRIORY HOUSE—THE TABLE D'HOTE—CHARACTERS—A CHAPTER OF PARADOXES—RETROSPECT OF THE TIMES OF THE CHOLERA, AND PASSING THE REFORM BILL.

"driven snows," to those, alas! who are no better than they should be—nay, much worse than they ought to be! "Who, that is at all acquainted with Cheltenham (where our scene will occasionally invite us), has not heard of the Priory House? the resort of the gay, yet no less so, from its respectability, of the grave and retired, amidst a wide world of fashion? the Antipodes to every thing that is stupid, yet the acmé of all that is tranquil and well-regulated? where the quiet and decorum of a domestic circle combine with the interest and variety of a wider assembly? whose society is as one wide family? where the single throng with the laudable object of doubling their happiness? where widows dread not to trust themselves, but with a good grace offer them to the chance of again submitting to connubial fetters, nor much regret to lay aside the

weed and the wimple, whoever may have been the 'Sichæus' for whom these 'Didos' had worn them?—where many a *garçon* and *vieux garçon, jeune homme* and *ci-devant jeune homme*, has his affections divided amongst the marriageable fair, and is willing to barter, with a laudable disinterestedness, his vast dividend of affection, for a moderate dividend at the Bank! Who," I ask again, "has not heard of the Priory House?" Every one! If the Countess Guiccioli used to lend her patronage to the boarding-houses of Brighton, the Hero of Waterloo (as it is duly recorded in the archives of the place) physicked his mighty self at this;—and though he, while he was here, might not have said, with Macbeth, "Throw physic to the dogs," yet we shall;—and, without further preamble, beg the reader's attendance at the best time for knowing this desirable place of abode—*videlicet*—the inviting

hour of dinner, and offer him a seat forthwith amongst the guests at the "table d'hôte," which (we need not inform him) is a "grand attraction" at the "Priory," and at Cheltenham generally, to all "souls of gaiety" and *bons vivans.*—What idler, in fact, at Cheltenham, has not felt and cannot appreciate the social charms of this particular scene and hour? No one would accuse the party assembled of ranking itself amongst the list of invalids of the place, to witness the spirit with which the duty of dining was promoted. Not amongst the least lively of the group, either for his appreciation of the good cheer, or seasoning it with good-humour, was our friend Melmont, who had arrived at Cheltenham two or three days before. He was sitting next to a young, rather pretty and very good-humoured looking widow lady, the Honourable Mrs. Angus, with whom he was launched in

the full glee of sprightly discussion, not forgetting also, that of some *soupe à-la-crême*, by way of accompaniment. Do not let the reader be offended at our mentioning the names of dishes now and then; we ought to let them see the bill of fare of the table d' hôte. Thus, then, we overheard their colloquy,—they were talking of wit—and a variety of matters.

"Nay, take them together! the one were *fade* without the other! the viands would be left without the seasoning!—physics and metaphysics! food both for body and mind! Variety of characters, too, as well as variety of dishes! I would not give a '*fico*,' as our old dramatists say, for an entertainment where I could not indulge my appetite for 'mirth as well as meat,' with a sprinkling of philosophy by way of *entremet*—I mean that the repast would do me no good, positively, without the more spiritual seasoning—the im-

material ingredient—(which, however, in this instance, is truly material). A dull dinner gives us as little nourishment as a bad one—it does me no good unless it puts me in spirits!"

"Doubtless, you would have made a worthy guest at the banquet of Plato!" answered the widow. "It is plain enough, and who would disagree with you in this proposition—that it is not the mere viands that should be looked to for an agreeable dinner; but you went something further a little while ago, and seemed to consider this seasoning of wit as a consequent on the goodness of the dinner, rather than as an *adjunct* for making it agreeable."

"Undoubtedly the one proposition is as true as the other! If wit gives zest to a good dinner, it is no less true, that good viands give birth to wit, by enlivening the blood, kindling the spirits, putting you in good-humour with that which is

before you, and those which are around you, and eliciting those scintillations which 'meagre commons,' served up by a second-rate *artiste*, could never inspire!"

"But is it not rather degrading to our sublime notions of our divine nature, to find the source of our brighter conceptions, and our forgetfulness of the dull earth we are composed of, in a cause so undignified and material?"

"Oh, fie! fie! we should be getting too metaphysical to ask that; we only know the fact. Nothing shall ever make me a convert to a temperance society. 'Water is the best thing,' says the society—so likewise does Pindar. Suppose we agree in considering champagne somewhat preferable?" So saying, he pledged his fair disputant in a glass of the sparkling beverage.

"There!" he continued, as he took the glass

from his lips, "the sparkles on the top of that glass should ever be a type of the merriment that is to follow from drinking it!—it were nothing without the sparkles of soul—of wit—imbibed with it. The very wine itself must have a soul!" added Melmont, laughing.

"Another paradox?" said Mrs. Angus, smiling.

"Nay, don't say paradox. Is it not true that, if a man had only half the soul before he drank of it, and twice the modicum after, he must have imbibed some soul with it and from it? Come, there is dignity for champagne, if there is not for humanity."

"Of course, it warms the frame; and by heating the blood, kindles the brain; but as for influencing the soul—I fear that this is rather

debased by such infusion into the system than otherwise."

"Yes, such would be the case in the instances of vulgar beverages, and of too ardent a nature, or in excess—*un peu de trop;* but, be assured, my hypothesis, in the present instance, is right: and when you admit that the warmth given to the frame puts into activity the brighter emanations of the brain, you grant me every thing I wish. What poetry had ever any soul in it—any passion, fire, expression, inspiration—that came from a water-drinking bard! The best Castalia is assuredly a glass of champagne, or any other worthy beverage. Talk not of the crystal rills of Parnassus—of Aganippé or Hippocréné—but of the *ruby* of Shiraz!*—in fine, 'les grands pensées vien-

* So, Hafiz, the Persian poet, calls the Shiraz wine. It is the favourite expression of the eastern Anacreon.

nent de l'*estomac*,' as my friend, Abel Hugo, says."

"What is he, but a *gourmand?* I will rather listen to your classical rhapsodies, than to the citation from a *savant* in sauces and ragouts, *marinades* and *fricandeaux!*"

"*Savant*, indeed, he is—he is both *gourmand* and *gourmet*—but really conscientious in his opinions on the subject," said Melmont, smiling; "he is a true *philosophe* on what he treats, and never considers the physical ingredients of a dish without a view to its effect on the metaphysical qualities of the constitution. That sentiment of his, which I quoted just now, is not equalled by one in all the pages of his namesake, the poet."

"Then I can't say much for the inspiration of Victor Hugo."

Here this interesting dialogue was interrupted

by our hero's helping Mrs. Angus to some *béchamel*, at the same time that he was asked to drink wine by a Mr. O'Callaghan, an Irish gentleman who had a "sneaking kindness" for "the widow." He was remarkable for wearing preposterously high collars, that reached up to a pair of gooseberry eyes, and scraped against the sides of his nose, like two folding plates on each side of a wheel in motion, much to the impediment of all he intended to convey into his mouth. He was a thorough Irishman in accent and manner, as the reader will perceive.

"By-the-by, I was guilty of a piece of ingratitude to you, the other night, at the ball," said Melmont to his Irish acquaintance.

"How will that be, faith?" answered the son of Erin, opening wide his gooseberry eyes, as if to see better through the obscurity of the enigma.

"Why you consented to be my *vis-à-vis* in the quadrille, when I was at a loss for one, and could not have danced without; so, you see, you 'put me in' the quadrille: but, ungrateful was my return; for, by talking to my partner, and forgetting what I was about, I did the wrong figure, and 'put you out!'"

"Oh, that shall be vary well said!" cried O'Callaghan, giggling, while he showed a row of horse teeth, as if he were exhibiting signs of biting our hero, rather than of laughing at his joke.

After recovering from the effects of this grin, which had somewhat discomposed the economy of the huge collars, he addressed Mrs. Angus with some common-place observations.

"Did ye go down to the promenade this marning?"

"Yes I did; there were a great many people

there; and I was glad to go, for once, as it was a fine morning—I go so seldom: it is too early for me."

"Will ye not be vary airly, then, indeed this marning?"

"Yes, indeed, very early."

"I dare say ye thought yirsilf cliver!" said O'Callaghan, intending, in this odd Hibernicism, to make a very sprightly remark, no doubt.

"What a curious expression!" said Melmont to Mrs. Angus, *sotto voce;* while, raising his voice, he asked the son of Erin if he might help him to a little *soufflet.*

"We hadn't the pleasure of yir company, Misther Melmont, yistirdy, at dinner. Ye were a deserter, were ye!"

"Yes—I have reason to remember being a deserter. I dined with a Mr. Fleming (an acquaintance I picked up since I have been

here,) who, literally, talked of nothing but reform and the cholera." (It is to be observed here, that it is at the "ever-memorable epoch" of these events, the period of our story takes place *. The reader will be rather amused than otherwise with the recurrence to it, as it is brief, and gives scope for the introduction of some drollery in incident and character.)

"Oh, dreadful!" said Mrs. Angus.

"That will be a tirrible pinance, will it!"

"He nearly gave me the cholera by dosing me so with it. Pain enough I endured, I can answer; and one symptom of it he certainly gave me, namely, that of making me 'look black, or blue' enough—which you please: and as for his boring about reform, I could not help

* This was an endless topic at Cheltenham, as people went there to avoid the disease. See dedication to these pages.

quietly wishing him at the devil, as many times as there were ten-pound voters under the bill!"

"Faith! I hope *I* may escape him!" ejaculated O'Callaghan. "I came to this 'likely' little spot of all pleasure and health to get rid of both the bores of subjects—did I. Bad luck to all prosers on a single topic, now! with two eyes in their head to see a thousand objects ivery day of their lives, it's a wonder they can't see enough to help 'em to more than one idea!"

"You won't escape him, then," said Melmont, "for he threatened giving us his company here to-day; but he is not come, I see. You will have him to-morrow, doubtless. Such an entertainment as Mr. Fleming is," he continued, turning to Mrs. Angus, "is not likely to win the approbation of Monsieur Hugo; its effects are

somewhat contrary to all that we were so agreeably contemplating a moment or two ago."

"That may be; otherwise, in a dull repast such as this, is the very field for the triumph of wit to display itself," said Mrs. Angus; "it is here that wit should vindicate itself, to make up for the deficiencies in other minds."

"You are not without reason here, though I can't give up my old proposition, while I assent to yours. I will carry yours yet further—that it is true dull men are as necessary ingredients in the mixture of society, as the brilliant; for how should we know what brilliancy is, unless by the contrast it offers to a soberer cast of mind? Without evil, we should not know what good is; besides, dulness, by serving as a kind of butt for cleverness to exercise itself on, calls forth a great many good things

that would lie dormant otherwise — lost and dead."

"I suppose you are in some measure right, though this does not give me the best picture of the *agrémens* of society, wherein one would wish to see the general harmony promoted by all bearing a worthy proportion in making the agreeable."

"Certainly, it would be more consistent with the ideas one has of theoretic 'brotherhood' in society; but I question whether society would have so much cleverness in it; for it would want the collision that calls out faculty, and which would not rise to such heights, or shine with such brightness as it does, were it not for some strong opposing impulse. All things act by contradiction — from a shrew of a wife to the system of gravitation — from things small to things great—from an atom to a world; and

this is best seen from its contrary;—a party of wits, for instance, brought together to say 'good things,' is invariably dull; they hold their tongues,—it is a hundred to one if they don't,—from being afraid, perhaps, of committing themselves before each other; or from vanity—lest amongst rivals they should not be sufficiently esteemed. Mix them up, on the contrary, with some duller geniuses, and then they have matter to play upon, and some 'foil' to set them off to advantage."

"What a contradiction, then, have you proved—that wit is indebted to dulness, actually, for its triumph! You must really be an original thinker, Mr. Melmont;—you have been startling me with paradoxes all dinner-time, and, on my word, I can't quite refute them, while I am unwilling altogether to acquiesce in them."

"I assure you, I should be very sorry you should consider them meant seriously to convince you," said Melmont, "or as having any other object than to amuse! I am not precisian or pedant enough, to 'set up' for a 'philosopher,' except as far as concerns the practice of that agreeable 'experimental philosophy,' shown in doing honour to a good dinner, with true epicurean spirit, and in drowning, in the discussion of trifles, the more disagreeable thoughts that might otherwise intrude on the mind, and make it forget that the true object in life — the true triumph of philosophy — is happiness for ourselves, and those about us."

Melmont spoke these words as though they had more than a mere general reference; for, although the very reverse from a sentimentalist, he was obliged to stifle a sigh that escaped as he uttered them. He now got up to open the

door for the ladies, who were withdrawing from the table. He did not sit very long after dinner, there being a "musical promenade," as it is called, that evening, which invited him to stroll down to the walks, by way of a lounge. On his departure, more than one person who had but arrived at the "Priory" that day, and did not know him, asked "who he was," and remarked (in the usual expression), "how much he had to say for himself!" and, "how agreeable, 'to be sure,' his manner was!" and some added, "especially when he talked with Mrs. Angus." With the ladies he was, perhaps, as much a favourite on account of his appearance, as of his liveliness in conversation.

The ladies will require us here to describe our hero's portrait. He was, of course, handsome; there was much intellect, as well as

intelligence, in his countenance, with an expression of great benevolence and good-humour combined. Cruikshank or Croquis would have refused to caricature so expressive a set of features: his eyes were dark; his eye-brows arched; face oval. He had remarkably good teeth, which he never made an unnecessary display of, by elongating the mouth by a perpetual grin, as many do; his forehead was high; his shoulders low; waist slim; good height and carriage;—above all, he looked eminently like a gentleman, and had such a *distingué* air (an air which no coxcomb—no dandy made up of pretension—can ever attain,) that he could never come into a room without drawing all eyes upon him. So much for our hero's portrait.

CHAPTER VI.

THE "FAMILY-PIECE."

Whether they're good for aught, or no,
Some things are only kept, for show;
And, spite of all Invention lends,
Antiquity more recommends;
And priz'd most are the statues, whose
Grand merit is—a broken nose!

HUDIBRAS.

BEFORE we enter further on the scenes of the "Recess," it is but fair that we should satisfy our reader's curiosity in giving him a picture of the Lentworth expedition, which certainly

promised a degree of respectable *grotesquerie* worthy of notice.

The day at length arrived which had been fixed for setting out from the castle. Alice's heart beat with joy as she rose early that morning and looked on a clear sky and the promise of a fine day for the journey. She felt as a bird emancipated from its cage, eager to try the wing it had so long fluttered with against its prison bars in vain. At length the hour of departure came. The old family carriage had been repainted and varnished with all possible expedition by the village artist. As for the painting and varnishing, it was pretty well—so far, so good; but the heraldry was the puzzling part of the affair. The design of this was a little too much for the unsophisticated sign-painter; and though he had executed a grim and splendid painting of the "Red Lion" at the village ale-

house, yet the quarterings, on a smaller scale, of lions rampant and passant, *gules*, in the "coat-armoury," were so uncouthly figured, that they bore the appearance of a *mêlée* of cats, indulging in their nightly orgies and obstreperous gambolings on the thatch of a cottage; for little better did the "field *or*," on which the said "lions" sprawled, appear. As for the motto, which was a Latin one, the poor man, not being able to make it out satisfactorily to himself, sagely concluded that it only signified "Sir Jasper's" name in a foreign "lingo," and accordingly he very conscientiously took upon himself the province of translator, and boldly inscribed underneath the shield, "The Lentworth Arms," concluding at the same time that he had authority for this reading from a similar inscription being on the sign of the chief inn of the village. Certainly, in doing this, he let all the world know the

importance of the personage the old carriage conveyed, of which interesting intelligence many must otherwise have been deprived. Sir Jasper, though he was inclined to be angry at the artist's simplicity, if not stupidity, could not help laughing at the absurdity, while Lady Lentworth was willing to consider the matter as easily as himself. As for the poor varnisher, when summoned to be reprimanded for his blunder (which he was), he stood, gaping, in utter surprise, unconscious of what mistake or misdeed he could possibly have been guilty, little expecting a reprimand where he had piqued himself on his singular address and cleverness. That there was now no time to alter the blunder, was earnestly suggested by Alice, who was impatient of further delay. She persuaded Sir Jasper that nobody would look at it, though the scrupulous knight himself much dreaded

"appearances," should any one by chance be idle or curious enough to scrutinise. Then the *tout-ensemble* of the respectable old vehicle! It looked much (portentous as it was in bulk) as Noah's ark might be supposed to do! The body of it was "swung high," as it is called; nay, so exalted was it, that none but shanks of a Patagonian longitude could easily stride up the steps; an operation, in this instance, like that of stepping up a ladder to get into a barn. Then with respect to the steps themselves, it was a tedious piece of business to "lug" them down; for so stiff had the hinges become, perhaps from want of use latterly, that it required all the ploughboy muscle of the new-liveried Toby to adjust them! Imagine the delight of the party inside in witnessing this exercise of strength repeated at every successive "stage!" Imagine Sir Jasper's resignation in waiting a quarter of

an hour nearly, till the step could be forced down, whenever he wished "to alight!" Imagine, if he betrayed any impatience on the occasion, the consoling tone of Alice, in order to pacify him! How interesting all this renders the scene. In fact, the carriage certainly proved the respectability and antiquity of the family that boasted of having it amongst its "goods and chattels." Methuselah himself (if that venerable antediluvian could have entertained any notion of such a piece of goods as a carriage) might have felt pride in its possession. The dickey in front was as huge as a fat alderman's arm-chair, and big enough for three persons. In this went the two most polished of the male domestics (all furbished up in new liveries), and "her ladyship's maid" in the middle. Toby, and another hobadyhoy of a groom, or groomling (for he was but young about the stables,) sat in a dickey

behind, or, as it is now called, a "rumble-tumble." The last-mentioned of these honest bumpkins was intended to ride behind Alice and Lady L. whenever they might require an airing on horseback. If Sir Jasper had been blessed (or plagued, as it might happen) with a son, or had been inclined to drive a "cab" himself, this lad might have made a very decent "tiger" for the occasion. On the top of the vehicle was a huge imperial, while as many things as could be crammed into it were so. There was plenty of room for all packages, for the sword-case in this roomy equipage was about as capacious as Jonah's lodging—the stomach of a whale! The seats, too, held as much as would have clothed, pretty nearly, half a regiment. In fact, the venerable "coach" was at any rate perfectly comfortable, as far as elbow-room was concerned, just as a French diligence is, but

then, unfortunately, it did not move over easily. Indeed, Sir Jasper declared, long before the first stage was completed, that to all "appearance" he was going to be jolted inside out, so lamentable an infliction was the shaking! Lady L. bore this severe discipline "as well as she might," and with her accustomed good humour, while Alice suffered herself to be inconvenienced by nothing, or if she was, she stifled her complaints, determined to let fate do its worst, so that the journey was prosecuted. An old barn, painted over and propelled leisurely along on castors, would not inadequately represent the appearance of the "family carriage" as it progressed slowly onward; and the horses, albeit they were the stoutest which the team of the worthy baronet afforded (as Toby well knew), found they had no sinecure, and imagined themselves, doubtless, dragging along a wagon-load

of hay or corn. Then Alice's "palfrey," and another for Lady L., with Sir Jasper's roadster, brought up the rear, ridden and led by the head groom and a boy. These outriders were in no fear of being out-distanced; for, as the roads were none of the best on the long and uneven descent from the castle to the main communication, and as the *vis-inertiæ* of the carriage and horses was great, three miles and a quarter was, perhaps, the maximum of advance made within the hour. How far it was accelerated in any of the subsequent stages further from the mountains, and which have the benefit of the improvement of the roads (thanks to the almost forgotten name of Mac Adam), is not recorded. As for Cheltenham, it appeared, at present, as distant as Australasia, or an undiscovered world. A lively genius might have found time to indite a History of the Universe by the time the pil-

grimage should be ended; however, by the blessing of Providence, and the exercise of due Christian patience, the party looked resignedly forward, at one time or another, to arrive at its conclusion. Meantime, such is a "true and faithful" portrait of the "appearances" which this amusing and grotesque cavalcade exhibited, as it wound "its slow length along" from the gates of Lentworth.

CHAPTER VII.

CHATTING AT TABLE AGAIN—SUBJECT OF "WIT" RENEWED, ETC.

"La gaieté porte toujours de bonheur."
(*L'Art de ne jamais dejéuner chez lui, et toujours dîner chez les autres.*)

MELMONT, on his arrival at Cheltenham, had not forgotten to call on his friend Sir Jasper Lentworth, who had arrived before him. The whole party were out, but he hoped to meet them that night at a ball. His heart told him he was concerned in being there; he longed to

see Alice again: meantime he fled from thoughts (connected with La Marre) that vexed him in this gaiety of the Recess. And now the dinner hour came again, and he found himself seated next to that fairest of widow ladies, the Honourable Mrs. Angus. O'Callaghan, as usual, also sat opposite to them, and if he tacitly owned a predilection for the lady, regarded our hero in some measure as a rival; yet so little notice was he favoured with by her, and so willingly did she appear to encourage the attentions of Melmont, that it would have been idle in the son of Erin to have scraped a quarrel on the subject, which could be of no benefit to himself; so he curbed the "divil" of his Irish "timper" (as he would say), and remained on "the best possible terms" with one he could not outstrip. They gossipped of the people, then of the place as usual.

"The Duke of ——" (since gone to his 'long home') "was looking better to-day, I thought," said Mrs. Angus.

"Yes, less like a statue of spermaceti than he did," answered Melmont; "he was so pale the other day that he looked quite suspicious!"

"How will that be, faith?" asked O'Callaghan, while Mrs. Angus also asked the same question.

"Why he looked as if he had murdered a turnip and sucked its blood — he was so white."

The party laughed at this solution of the suspicious appearance, while O'Callaghan continued—

"Talk of murthering a turnip and sucking its blood! faith, auld Sir John —— looks as if he had been murthered himself, and had risen again to haunt his assassin. They say he'll be

in a consumption, or an atrophy—which they please. I'm sure it's all one, for he's safe 'bespoke' by auld Charon, whichiver road he's going."

"I fancy he's dying," answered Melmont, "of a rapid consumption—of his purse. His pocket has been ransacked into an atrophy, if you please; I conceive his wretched appearance is more from a malady of this nature than from any in his constitution."

"Did I not see you riding out to-day?" inquired Mrs. Angus of Melmont.

"Yes, and I had a very unpleasant companion too, I am sorry to say."

"That is unfortunate. Who was this?"

"Nobody but the east wind."

"A disagreeable companion enough,' replied Mrs. Angus, smiling.

"Yes, it never accosts one but it swells one's

face, multiplies the amount of one's nose by four, pinions one up with the cramp like a trussed pigeon, lays an embargo upon everything that goes down one's throat under interdict of a quinsy, and flings twenty years of old age upon one's head without the benefit of the experience."

"That shall be vary well said, Misther Melmont," exclaimed the Irishman; while the widow, who was more nicely critical, remarked,

"The last of the attributes you gave to the mischievous company of the east wind was the best."

"How so?" said Melmont; "not that I thought any of them particularly good, but why is the last of them the best?"

"Because it approaches nearer to wit than the others, which are more allied to humour."

"You are indeed a good critic," said Mel-

mont; when addressing O'Callaghan, he asked, "What is the difference between wit and humour?"

The Irishman was rather puzzled, but at length answered with a more than ordinary grimace:

"Why, d'ye see, they're vary different—I'm aware of that, faith!—but then I can't justly characterise them. If ye asked me to spake concisely, I should say 'humour made ye grin, and wit made ye stare.'"

"Excellently defined! you have expressed the characteristics briefly, but pointedly and justly."

"Wit has more of sprightly grace," observed the widow, as we call her to avoid formality.

"Wit consists in a bright sally,—a spark vividly struck out of the subject,—a meteor light starting across the flatter surface of the conver-

sation—a sally which conveys something pointed and epigrammatic. Locke defines it," continued Melmont, "as 'imagination.' Barrow's definition, in that curious and interesting 'hour-glass' sermon of his, is very ample and very just; it 'leaves nothing more to be said *of* it or upon it,' which is treating the subject 'cruelly,' as Charles the Second said in a jocose irony, complimenting the preacher."

"Vary often ye find a man of humour without anything of wit in um," observed O'Callaghan.

"Oh! repeatedly," replied Melmont; "humour is of a lower order; it is drollery of character—it is facetiousness. The English have a good deal more humour than wit; our lively neighbours the French are happier, generally speaking, in making brilliant sallies than ourselves. The wit that prevailed in

Charles the Second's time exhibited many pearls certainly, but amongst a quantity of base and vulgar dross, and this 'smarter' style was borrowed originally from the court of Louis."

"So it is," observed Mrs. Angus, "with our older dramatic writers of Elizabeth and James's time; for one line of unadulterated wit, there are fifty disfigured by improprieties which the taste of the day sanctioned."

"Yes, a great deal of dross passed current till a very late period. A good deal of indelicacy was permitted to pass as wit under Congreve's authority, a good deal of vulgarity to pass as humour under Smollett's. Conversation, until very lately, was considered to acquire liveliness from that which we now consider the dullest and most vulgar ingredient—namely the inter-larding of oaths in a sentence. That 'fashion' is exclusive now with potboys and

cads. On the other hand, if there is more taste shown in the style of conversation, there is much less cleverness in our matter-of-fact and select style; for real wit, except in the instances of one or two friends I know, is really defunct."

"Yes, there appears to be a sad effort to pump up a good saying, to figure in the columns of some journal, perhaps, under the sanction of Rogers or some known person; and then the point lies in a pun!"

"You observe very justly, wit does not seem to be understood; that brilliancy and vivacity of mind that should exhibit a sally is a '*dis-position*,' as the French say, which our wit-mongers do not possess: they grovel in the dust of punning. Nothing is more low, more easy of attainment—nothing more vapid and insipid!"

"Ye've no Butler now, nor Swift, nor Sheridan—very few purveyors of wit."

"No, nor even of good genuine humour—or very little of it. The English are apt to let their humour degenerate into coarseness and buffoonery; it is not necessary that humour should be allied to vulgarity, which too many seem to think, from the nature of their facetiousness. There may be amusing drollery, as in the French vaudevilles and some of our better farces, without licentiousness, coarseness, or indelicacy."

"Shall you go to the ball, Mr. Melmont, this evening?" asked Mrs. Angus, turning to another subject.

"Yes, I go there to gaze on the 'human face divine,' but I don't dance much."

"How's that?" asked Mrs. Angus.

"Why one gets tired of the monotony of lounging through the figures after doing duty all through the season in town. I prefer amusing myself with looking at the rainbow glitter of dresses and bright complexions."

"Do you expect to see much beauty this evening?"

"Pretty well; there are a good many very charming faces. If to nine plain you count one fair, there is one fair in ten."

"Ye're quite epigrammatic," said O'Callaghan, grinning.

"That is about the proportion."

"Indeed a very fair one," said the widow.

"Who is that gentleman staring so this way?" asked Melmont.

"Faith, I don't know," said O'Callaghan; "he looks very hard, but he never says a word—for all the world like a ghost till it's spoken to."

"I understand that gentleman is what is called a 'genius,'" said Mrs. Angus.

"He may be, certainly," replied Melmont, "for anything we can allege to the contrary, for he never opens his mouth. If a man *is* a 'genius,' he should let the world have some signs of his intellect—and talk (not let a gift of God make him dumb-foundered). I would not give a pin to be a genius, if I was to turn as silent as if I were a probationary scholar in the academy of Pythagoras."

"What does that signify?" asked the widow.

"It was a rule in Pythagoras's school that five years' silence should be observed. I consider that 'yonder genius' would make an excellent scholar in that academy. You often see clever men resign themselves to silence, and thus become extremely unsociable when they

take it into their heads that they are geniuses; thus they go the sure way to make themselves stupid—or to appear so at least."

Amongst other guests at table, besides the silent author, for such he was, they were remarking on, was a tiresome old gentleman—out of Melmont's way, happily for him and our reader—who talked of nothing but what was good for his digestion, whenever he was helped to anything at table; besides giving an exact account of the state of his pulse, and a history of the last prescription he had from Dr. Boirragon, the great Galen of this place at the period to which these pages refer—as Jephson is of Leamington. To Melmont's great joy, Mr. Fleming did not to-day put his threat into execution of dining at the table d'hôte, reserving it, perhaps, for some future period;—so we are spared at present, any recurrence to

the subjects of reform and the cholera, which at the time they raged, generated bores of the Fleming kind, worthy recording. We trust we shall contrive to escape them when it is attempted to dose us with them. This rescue we must leave to our hero, for the amusement of the reader who has, no doubt, often had occasion to wish to escape from a bore of this kind, on these once endless subjects. Meanwhile, Melmont dressed for the ball—but was rather late—and on entering the drawing-room, found all his party had gone away before him, except the fair widow and two or three other ladies.

"What, left behind!" said Melmont, when he entered the room, and saw all were gone.

"You are late," said Mrs. Angus.

"Nay, they are early—terribly early indeed!—well, I must e'en go by myself," he added, ringing the bell, and ordering a fly;

"I'm sorry to be obliged to go in such bad company."

The ladies smiled, and observed he paid himself an ill compliment; in a moment after the fly was announced as ready.

"There! now you fly off to the world of gaiety," said one of the ladies, "to fly from yourself, which will save your complaining of having the 'fly' to yourself."

Melmont smiled out of complaisance at this remark, though he was no admirer of the 'wit' that consists in a play upon words, which he considered but spurious; and answered, "he was, indeed, always happy to fly from himself, which he should be glad to do oftener than he did!"

"How it amused those women," said he to himself when in the fly, "my saying I was sorry to go in such bad company, in going by

myself! Lord what a little will go a great way in this world, in all things except money! What a slight grain of wit will season a whole conversation in this dull world! What a little word of flattery or compliment, again, will make a vain person your sworn friend! address! address!—the manner of saying things does much to give the appearance of wit to a good deal that is very indifferent stuff." In the middle of this soliloquy the little vehicle stopped at the ball-room door, and in our hero ushered himself to the scene of gaiety.

"Who is he? how handsome! how *distingué!* what a free carriage and fine countenance!" were, as usual, the remarks of the fairer portion of the assembly, on Melmont's showing himself; "how very gentlemanlike and agreeable,"—as he addressed different persons he knew whilst walking up the room; but in casting his eyes

round the room to look for his numerous acquaintance, who should he see but one lovely person that eclipsed all present. "Ah, there she is!" he exclaimed, "and there is Lady Lentworth, and there is my old friend Sir Jasper! and Alice—she is more beautiful than ever." Perhaps the reader would like to know what kind of beauty it was, that had thus suddenly burst upon our hero; how far it was beautiful, we will leave the reader to decide, from the following description:—her carriage was the most graceful and dignified, its air of distinction aided by a dress of the most perfect taste, and the farthest from showy imaginable; her small head (at the time we speak of) elegantly dressed with bows,—not one great bow and a friz at the sides, which was a late fashion, but soon utterly discarded for its excessive ugliness; her waist so taper,

so sylphlike, and slim — that to touch it in waltzing would have made a being inanimate as a statue thrill with soul* and extasy; her neck small, and properly elevated above gracefully low shoulders, displaying a skin of marmorean polish and loveliness! features the most expressive—beaming with intellect, cheerfulness, benevolence, and sweetness of temper. The spirit of love, the soul of amiability, spoke in the language of eyes whose "radiant languish" streamed from orbs lustrous as brilliants of the richest water; they were deep blue, fringed with long dark silken lashes; the eyebrows delicately arched; the complexion the softest "maiden blush" of the rose; the forehead, white

* So Milton says of music :—

> "Sounds that would create a *soul*
> Under the ribs of Death."
>
> COMUS.

as snow, contrasted with hair of the deepest auburn. The nose was "exquisite" both in form and expression—being that rarest of all beautiful lineaments—the *nez à la Roxalane*—the most delicate description of that lovely and piquant feature! the little tiny mouth was bordered by rims of coral! the ears exquisitely minute. Melmont's heart beat violently as he approached this charming creature; every nerve trembled through his frame; he was lost in admiration of Alice Lentworth, for it was herself. The old baronet shook him heartily by the hand; and Lady L. was very happy to see one who was in request with every person, and everywhere, and was pleased at the prospect of having him as a chaperon. Our hero could not take any interest in the questions Sir Jasper put to him about his late election business (which Sir J. had mentioned in chapter three)—Alice

engrossed his attention; he danced for the first time since he had been at Cheltenham—because she was his partner. It is needless to say that he danced with no one else that evening:—it is needless, too, to say that the fair widow was —for the present at least—forgotten.

CHAPTER VIII.

AT "BOB RESTAMY'S," (ANOTHER "FIGARO"), OR "THE CHATTERING BARBER," A ONCE WELL-KNOWN CHARACTER OF THE PLACE.

Bravo, Figaro,
Bravo bravissimo!
* * * *
Sono factotum
Alla città.

(FIGARO)—*Il Barbiere.*

THE first place almost to which Sir Jasper had repaired after his arrival at Cheltenham (as has doubtless been the case of many of our

readers, after a long rustication), was the hairdresser's, with the laudable purpose of curtailing a most Arcadian luxuriance of hair.

The person to whom he addressed himself in this emergency, was one of those loquacious characters who have been the distinction of their calling from the time that Aristophanes quizzed the Athenian world, to that of the writer of the Arabian Tales, and thence down to the times of the mercurial Figaro himself. On Sir Jasper's asking this magpie shaver if he knew where Mr. Melmont was to be found, the said delighted shaver fixed on the question as a starting point for running out the full length of his tongue's reach.

"Oh yes, sir; know very well, sir—at the Priory, just at the top of the High street; never find him at home though—always engaged—a gentleman much in request, none more so—they say he has two or three games in hand for

the bettering his fortune, at present—charming place this for little intrigues of that kind. I *could* say, if I pleased, a good deal about the matter—but know what I've got 'one tongue and two ears for,' too well. Ay, ay, 'the Greeks knew this,' though I should have practised the maxim, even if I had not learned it at the Grammar school at ——. Dear times, those schoolboy times!—Cut a little more behind, sir?—yes, sir—exactly, sir—not too much, sir—moderation in every thing: '*auream quisquis mediocritatem*,' as my old friend Horace says. Yes, yes, it's a fine thing to be prudent, sir; yet it's no easy matter in a place like this, with such a number of delicate jobs in hand as I have, I promise you! yet I *say* nothing—I'm not given to talking."

"Not at all! indeed!" ejaculated Sir Jasper to himself, while the shaver ran on.

"Yes, yes, if I can manage it, it will be a discreet job—the gentleman's at the 'Imperial'—

but I don't let out secrets; and the lady is not many doors from my house—I don't say how far her house is up the street on the other side—nor if it is the only white house in the street, with pilasters in front; no, no, I don't let things out."

"Mighty discreet, truly," again ejaculated the baronet.

"I say, if I manage this little run-away bit of a job, Bob Restamy's fortune's made; they always call me 'Bob,'—short and familiar, just as you would address a fellow you wanted to coax by good-humoured familiarity into being of service to you. Ah! if you knew the presents I've had, and the numbers of 'promises on hand to pay,' from the happy couples I have had the good fortune to make acquainted with each other, and trundle off to the altar together, you would fancy Bob Restamy ought to be as rich as a satrap. Alas! no—I was always too

generous—too liberally spirited; 'spend to-day, spare to-morrow,' was always my motto."

"Pray, where did you say Mr. Melmont was to be found?" interrupted Sir Jasper.

"Mr. Melmont, sir? yes sir, at the Priory, sir. Follow your nose straight up the street. Lord, I couldn't help laughing the other day, I said so to a gentleman whose nose was as crooked as a crab claw, and he thought positively I meant to offend him; not so I!—the last man to offend any body in the world. .... 'What persons here?' did you ask, sir. Oh yes, sir: can tell you from 'the duchess,' down to the drab of the kitchen!—know every body in the place! —Talking of the 'duchess,' by the by, there is 'the great lady' here, every where to be seen, sir—yes, sir, a 'perambulating mine of wealth,' sir, truly so!—her husband, too, a mere vegetable substance, thoroughly so,—good description

of the two—ha, ha, ha! Go down to the Promenade, sir, in the mornings—you drink the waters, sir, don't you?—I hope so!—do you good—you should get what you can out of the place!—see all the world in the morning before ten o'clock!—see all the importation of ladies sent here to the 'marriage mart.' Yes, sir, I remember the same faces two or three years running; of no use!—no fortune!—'my face is my fortune, sir, she said'—the song says so, but it won't do. No, no, Bob Restamy knows that, without the help of his Latin, (a good thing, by-the-by, a spice of the '*literæ humaniores;*' elegant learning—eh! Yet I may sport a scrap here—*spectatum veniunt, veniunt spectentur ut ipsæ.*' It is all very well to look at a pretty face, but one must look to the prettier complexion of the '*aurum palpabile;*' a curmudgeon world this! wretched sordid state of things—bad job! but gold has

been scarce, since the Age of Gold. Yes, sir, almost cut your hair enough now, sir! think it will nearly do, sir—the—one snip or two more, sir, and though I say it, it will then be perfection. Ay, sir, 'Bob Restamy is the lad!' as my old schoolmaster used to say, as he patted me on the head, and predicted I should be a great man in my way! And when I was valet to the young Count Gustavo—(a cross dog the old count)—a little bit more clipped at the side, sir, for uniformity's sake, *elegantiæ causâ*. Yes sir—ay,—as I was saying, when I was with the young Count Gustavo, just before that sad affair....You know all about it, sir, don't you! the pinking business; oh, very melancholy, but I say nothing, for he would not wish me to say any thing of the matter—can't tell where he is: however, he need never fear I should let out any thing! Mum is the word with me!—close

as a coach-horse. My old school-master, God bless him, always used to say I should make a good diplomatist in my way, such was my discretion. Well do I remember him! he wore pepper and salt galligaskins and drab gaiters, buckles on his shoes, and a huge square coat, with flaps like those of a dining-table; bald crown, peaked nose tipped with purple; face like a raw beef-steak. Capital old fellow was he, old Josborne! think I see him now....Did you speak, sir?...find him at home? find Mr. Melmont at home?—can't say, sir—out with the fair widow lady, I dare say sir—great friends! something in the wind, as I hinted before; but, as I say, 'mum' is the word with me; and though my services may be required, all will be hermetically sealed. '*Volto, sciolto, pensieri, stulti,*' as they say in Italy. I used to say that to the young Count Gustavo, when he

questioned me on my secresy in taking letters to the lady... but I won't let out her name, though it is no matter now. Oh, sir, all trust me; high, low, rich, and poor, one with another, as the Scripture says, what would they do without me? Belles and blowsalindas, nymphs and knaves, roués and romance-actors, quiet and quarrelsome, wags and watergruel drinkers—all flock to me to conduct their little concerns. Shocking place this, or rather charming, I should say, for intrigues—so secluded—the walks, *latebræ dulces;* people so brought together in boarding houses—such opportunities, and some of them golden opportunities, as Shakspeare says, when of my contriving——"

Sir Jasper could sit no longer to hear the clack of this hair-cutting daw of a man, and the operation he had required being now completed, he rose hastily, and cut off any further annoy-

ance from this impertinent gabble, which, indeed, had only reached its middle as the adventure of "the Bear and Fiddle" in Hudibras. Forth he now sallied to look for our hero, the clack of the hair-dresser, Restamy, still sounding in his ears the whole way up the street. Sir Jasper had not gone far before he met the object of his search; he shook Melmont by the hand, at the same time reminding him of his promise to recommend him some eligible situation as a dwelling-place during his stay in Cheltenham. Our hero was delighted to be of any service, and took him up towards "Lansdowne," as it is called, where Sir Jasper soon satisfied himself, in taking one of the handsomest houses in the place; of course Sir Jasper's day was occupied in removing Lady L. and Alice from the hotel to which they had come on their arrival, and in getting settled in their new quarters.

Melmont went and lounged the day away at a library or reading-room, where he fell in with a number of loungers like himself.

"Who was that old gentleman you were walking past with, Melmont, a moment ago?" asked one of his friends; "a fine bluff-looking old fellow, whoever he is."

"That was Sir Jasper Lentworth, famous in times past for his consequence on the turf."

"Ah! Sir Jasper, was it? The turf, though, turned out but a bad business with him latterly; his last failure, the effect of that unlucky 'stake,' must have been felt by him for some time after."

"Ay, and is now," said Melmont, sighing, as he thought of such a beautiful creature as Alice having so little of that necessary promoter of 'female attraction,' fortune; without which he considered his circumstances positively forbade him to assume the fetters of matrimony—though

anything like a sordid, or selfish feeling was to him unknown.

"What sort of a looking man is Sir Jasper?" asked another of the party of loungers;—"I hardly know him by sight."

"Oh, you can't very well mistake him," said Melmont, smiling, "when you have once seen him!" With this he continued to give a description of the worthy knight; and recollecting that our reader has not yet had a full or satisfactory portrait of him, we will offer him one, by no less an artist than our hero.

"Setting aside the important particulars in which some indulge," said Melmont, with a humorous gravity worthy of Sir Jasper himself, "of stating precisely his inches without his shoes, suffice it to say he is nearly six feet, with a handsome portliness and rotundity of person — very evident in the proportions of his waistcoat after the second course has

made some progress at table: his countenance is joviality personified! good humour beams in a face the most 'rubicund'—a very beacon for the signal of conviviality! 'Flushed with a purple grace, he shows his honest face,' as Dryden says of Bacchus. He is thoroughly 'English' in all his tastes, fashions, and predilections; too candid, however, and sensible to be bigotted or prejudiced in favour of defects and abuses in our social or civil polity: he is the very *beau-idéal* of a 'bluff, honest, hearty Englishman.' Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, that excellent "three-W" named hero of North Cambria, would be jealous of him! he is much such another, though his voice is pleasanter;—not to banter on the stale joke of 'bubble and squeak,' it has a fine sonorous intonation worthy to utter the good sentiments of a liberal heart and unprejudiced

mind. Before the 'light of his countenance' ('full-orbed' and jovial as I have described it), the whole train of megrims, vapours, blue devils, spectres of ruin, phantoms even that haunt the name of 'National Debt,' fly discomfited! The livid complexion of that ugly stranger from the east — that indigo-visaged demogorgon cholera, shrinks confounded and keeps its distance. Good-humour, by the by, is the best antidote to the intrusion of this ugly and ugly-dispositioned exotic. In fact, Sir Jasper is a fine old English country gentleman; he lives now almost entirely on his estate amongst his own tenantry. If his property has been a little, or even not a little impaired by his horse-racing propensities, his losses have not certainly had the effect of embittering his life with regrets or moroseness, or even occasional melancholy. Nay, Sir Jasper is quite a philosopher in this respect—more truly deserving

the name than any other person I know! He does not understand what maundering means! Many would have looked as if they had come from the cave of Trophonius, had they been on the losing side to the amount he was. The most amusing trait of his character—and it is here that he piques himself on being philosophical—is, that, with what he has, it is proper to 'keep up appearances,'—which, in fact, he is fully able to do, as befits his name and station, although not the opulent person he was when in parliament, and had the offer of a peerage: this, you are aware, he refused. 'No new titles for me!' said the old knight; 'to be a baronet of Nova Scotia is title enough, being that which my fathers bore before me since the creation of the dignity. I am no great lover of titles or hereditary distinctions among men, though the question admits of argument; the title I have is sufficient for

me,—and even this much of rank I would not have coveted had it not descended to me. No, no, I have little respect for new dignities, such as are bought—such as bankers are—or used to be—buying every day: — to be plain "Mr." so-and-so, of a good old family, the generations perhaps traced from the conquest, would be a matter of greater pride to me, and confer a greater feeling of nobility than the new dignities bartered at set prices! A bloody hand is now, for the most part, a sign that the person who bears it in his coat armour has had his fingers grubbing in the prolific mud of the Exchange all his life. Pshaw!—a peerage—I'll none on't.' So the stout Sir Jasper reasons in the spirit of independence, much in the vein of Hampden of old, as it is said. Yea, so spoke the brave Sir Jasper, while the pride of the minister was greatly mortified! But you would be much amused with his phi-

losophical reasons for the maintenance of his favourite rule of action, namely, keeping up appearances. He argues, that however really hollow or insufficient a man's circumstances may be, yet that a decent figure must always be kept up in the eyes of the world. This kind of honest fraud, or rather amiable disguise, he considers not only right but charitable, inasmuch as it conduces to the happiness of life; for by its avoidance of all that is discouraging in appearance, people are put in good humour with a man, and society goes on agreeably; the damp that would otherwise be cast on the mind is prevented; and besides this, the selfishness too much inherent in human nature of displaying one's own grievances and causes of annoyance, is repressed and subdued instead of whining out its tale to the end of a long catalogue of ills, to make those about us as wretched as

ourselves on account of the sympathy which we selfishly require of them.

"Such is the philosophy of my friend, Sir Jasper. You see he does not maintain a theory without exemplifying it by rational and beneficial practice—as is the fashion with the political economy school. Such is his philosophy, I say, and his practice—such is his portrait. Take him all in all, where will you find a better model for imitation? you may find many a worse."

CHAPTER IX.

A BIT OF A MORAL. AN AIRING TOWARDS PITTVILLE.

Charity covers a multitude of sins.
ST. PAUL.

"AND, now, Lady Lentworth," said Sir Jasper, after they found themselves settled in their new quarters, "we must let the old carriage have some rest after its fatigue; verily its old limbs, or rather old timbers, have need of repose! Wofully did they complain throughout

the journey, if one may so interpret the creaking of the wheels, springs, (such as they are!) and axle! a mournful concert it was; and I'm sure has successfully pleaded with me to give the old family-piece some rest—*otium cum dignitate!*"

"Most assuredly," said Lady L., amused at her lord's feeling oratory in behalf of the piece of domestic lumber; "its petition shall certainly be granted; it need not dread a refusal. The new carriage has been sent down, has it not?"

"Yes, yes, all due appearances are saved;—look out at the window—what see you?"

"Oh, that is the carriage they have sent!—well, I like it very well—it is a britchka, I see!"

"Yes, don't you like that kind of carriage to drive about this fine weather? Alice, don't you like it?"

"Very much," replied Alice; when, in

the midst of this survey of the britchka, in walked our hero. She blushed, perhaps surprised at the suddenness of his entry,—his eye caught hers the first in the room.

"How do you, Sir Jasper?—Lady Lentworth, I hope you're very well.—I hope you're not fatigued, Miss Lentworth, with dancing yesterday evening?—a very nice ball we had."

"Very nice, indeed!" said Alice; "very well attended,"—her voice somewhat confused, as Melmont thought. — (The reader remembers they had been partners.)

"I trust you like this situation?" he said to Lady L., seeming as if he tried to take refuge in some other subject from an embarrassment he felt as well as Alice.

"Very much; I think this Lansdowne the most eligible situation in the place; it is an easy distance, too, to the Promenade."

"I thought you would like it."

"I'm sure we are much indebted to you for recommending it to us," said Lady L.

"Come, Mr. Melmont," exclaimed Sir Jasper, "I see you have your horse at the door—you shall accompany us out, if you will; it is fine at present, and we shall be happy if you will make our route your own."

"With great pleasure," said Melmont; so offering his arm to Lady L., he handed her down stairs, and into the carriage. Alice rode on Fairy, the palfrey already mentioned, before the party left Lentworth. Toby acted as groom, on a horse that pranced about as much as was requisite. Sir Jasper got into the britchka with Lady L., in order to see if it went easily, instead of riding his "roadster," which he permitted to share in the repose of the old carriage. So off went the party in the

direction of the gardens at Pittville, Melmont riding by Alice's side.

"Very neatly laid out, those gardens!" observed Alice to her companion, as they now came to them.

"Everybody must think this place agreeable but the proprietor," said Melmont.

"Nay! that is hard upon him!" said Alice.

"Why, I should think, valuing a good reason at the rate a lawyer (as I am told) is paid for giving one, viz., one pound, there are sixty thousand reasons why the proprietor should dislike it; for as many pounds have been sunk unprofitably in it—so they say."

"Truly he has no reason indeed to like it; but I hope people will have taste enough to appreciate his exertions and the beauty of this spot, and not leave it disregarded and desolate,

—a mere blank for spirited but unfortunate speculation to repent its projects over."

It was thus the lovers chatted, beating about the bush of topics yet more interesting than those which the spot before them gave rise to; so to turn from the lottery of speculation and its romance, to the romance of another description —not of the head but the heart—the conversation now wandered back to the party of the preceding evening, in which Melmont and his fair companion had danced together, and had been inseparable partners. They rode some little way before the carriage, and the conversation soon became more interesting (as it is called) than our hero had at first thought he would have permitted it to be; but he found he loved the person to whom he spoke too much to be able long to speak coolly, or keep up a constraint his heart rejected. In fact, one thing

leading to another, he made an avowal of his interest in her; and, by the embarrassment she betrayed in the colour that "came and went" on her fair cheek, the broken answers she returned, and the hesitating voice in which they were delivered, it may be supposed the avowal was not made to one who was insensible of it. They had unconsciously fallen into so slow a pace now, that they found the britchka at their heels, and both were glad to turn aside from the delicate subject that had engrossed them, to the first object, however trivial, that presented itself. Such was not wanting on the present occasion. A poor little girl was sitting crying by the roadside, for whom Alice's interest was awakened; and accordingly, with an expression of consolation, accompanied by Melmont, she rode up to the child, who was of an exceedingly pretty and interesting countenance, but forlorn,

desolate, and tattered enough to have won the heart of that ancient chronicler of rags and wretchedness, Euripides himself: she was as miserable as the whole family of the Heraclidæ put together, and was crying the "very eyes out of her head," as the phrase goes.

"What is the matter, little girl?" said Melmont. After a pause, the child not being able to answer for crying, he repeated the question—"My dear, what is the matter? Dry up your tears and tell me all about it,—whatever it may be. Perhaps the child has been begging," he added, to Alice, "and has not been successful, and is afraid to return to its parents, who have sent it out to beg; or she may be crying thus tragically about an apple or piece of gingerbread, filched from her by some little rival vagabond." However, these were not the causes of the child's distress, as appeared on her

becoming more pacified, when she gave the too frequent, the often too just account of "the destitution of her mother, and her own state of starvation; which condition was entailed by the arrest of her father for a debt of six hundred pounds. She stated that her parent was a respectable tradesman; that, up to the time of this arrest, he had flourished, and maintained his family respectably;—that everything he had was now seized, himself in gaol, and her mother and herself without clothes, or a morsel to support nature."

Lady L.'s carriage had now come up to the spot where the child stood, while Alice and our hero were listening to her tale of distress. Lady L., after the carriage had stopped, observed, she thought she knew the child's features. "What is your name, my dear?" she asked.

"Minton," was the reply.

"I do believe it is the same! What are your parents?"

"My father kept a 'fancy shop' in London, for all kinds of furniture, china, and fancy things."

"Then they must be the same!" said Lady L., turning to Sir Jasper; "this comes of our 'keeping up appearances!' I fear the six hundred pounds, for default of paying which this family is suffering, are a debt incurred by me for various things—trifles, many of them—by way of assisting to furnish the house during our stay in town. I had quite forgotten the circumstance of the debt, or having been asked to pay it!"

Sir Jasper looked surprised. Being a benevolent man, he fully sympathised with Lady L. in her concern that any distress should have been occasioned by their joint thought-

lessness or extravagance; and though he did not contemplate any great satisfaction to his pocket in satisfying this heavy demand, yet, as his conscience would be satisfied, he determined upon justice being done, and amends made to the poor family for its misfortune. Lady L. declared she should not be happy until the father was released from prison, and the mother had assistance and care: for, though inclined to be expensive, nay, even extravagant and thoughtless as to expense, she was a person of excellent feeling when the touchstone that was to try her compassionate qualities was applied; otherwise she permitted herself, as a general habit of mind, to think too little of consequences in any thing she did; and the result of her own extravagance in the present instance was the very last thing she should ever have dreamed of. As it was, she was anxious to make as speedy a repara-

tion as might be. Toby was commissioned to take charge of the child and bring it back to Cheltenham, from which it had wandered along the road crying and begging; meantime the coachman was ordered to drive to the place where the child said her mother was. Upon reaching the house, Lady L. went herself to see the poor woman, not content with a mere inquiry after her. She came just in time to witness the fatal result of a thoughtlessness which she did but share in common with a multitude of others, as to matters of expense, yet not often with consequences so unhappy. The poor woman had been so broken down by grief at the distress of her husband, want of care and sustenance, that nature was unable to rally. Everything, however, that the emergency of the case admitted, was administered; medical aid and proper nourishment were immediately supplied;—but it was all

in vain—this victim of ill-fortune had suffered more than her strength could bear! She expired,—unconscious, or scarcely conscious of what was attempted to be done for her.

Lady L. and the whole party were quite shocked and miserable at this tragic "passage" in the drama of the day. The least, she felt, she could do was to take upon herself the care and support of the child; while Sir Jasper lost no time in giving his bond for the payment of Minton's debt—which was indeed his own—to the creditors. The man was speedily released from prison; and Sir Jasper, not content with making thus far reparation for what he had unintentionally caused him to suffer, made him farther amends by putting him, rent-free, into a small cottage with a few acres of land round it, that just then became vacant on the property at Lentworth, in consequence of the death of an

old domestic who had enjoyed these premises till death, as a reward for past services.

As for little Agnes,—such was the child's name,—her father joyfully consented to her being admitted into her ladyship's family, which she was, to be taken care of till she could be sent to a good school, where she might receive a proper education for her station in life.

With respect to the moral with which this chapter is spiced, we must just remark, that if the instances of our worthy "knight's" maxim of "keeping up appearances" have been hitherto shown in humorous examples alone, in how many could it be shown of a nature as melancholy as that which the above chapter exhibits *. In how many instances could the bitter and

* Here the subject of "debtor and creditor" suggests to consideration, that it is not the first who is injured by cruelty, but often the last, and much more so!

fatal results of thoughtlessness and extravagance be shown, without the redeeming virtue of compassion, which is pictured as strongly in Sir Jasper and Lady Lentworth as that of the levity that originally occasioned its exercise. How many are base and hard-hearted enough even to ridicule the idea of entertaining the feeling, the compunction, the compassion, which we have especial pride and pleasure in exhibiting to the credit of the characters we were pourtraying! The mind is little to be envied that can boast of being unconcerned at the misery often occasioned by heedless luxury. Nothing shows delicacy of mind, good taste, and good breeding, so much as being able to place ourselves in the position of others,—to act with forbearance,—not to permit the wantonness of our indulgence to run riot to the sacrifice of the happiness and credit of those who are in a

humbler sphere of life than ourselves. Vulgar and callous minds consider that this want of consideration is the height of "breeding," (as they would mis-call it,) and the *sans souci* of refinement;—far from it—to occasion distress and calamity heedlessly is dishonourable; and whatever is a breach of the delicate sense of honour, in any branch of its consideration, is a defect in propriety of conduct, in good breeding, and good taste,—is worthy only of the weak, the vulgar, the sordid, and the vicious. Nothing is more truly disgusting, perhaps, than "selfishness,"—the being unable to appreciate the feelings of others,—to be indifferent to them, either in trifling with them at the present moment, or in meanly scorning to soothe them after we have wounded them. Many indulge in a coarse and brutal jest on the subject, and if they have done an injury to parties weaker than themselves,

pretend to quiet their conciences in all the pride of an absurd sneer, by giving something away in another quarter;—occasioning, perhaps, the ruin of a poor family in one quarter, and giving something to a "charity" in another! Verily, true charity "covers a multitude of sins," but not in this instance, nor in this spirit. The sentence just cited, loses its beauty and its pith when it is uttered by the baser character we are now pourtraying, in the deformity and guilt of a sneer.

CHAPTER X.

CARVING AND COZING AGAIN—"CHARACTERS, MORE CHARACTERS."

And thus they chatted—many a gay conceit
Bandied, with just remark, yet pleasant, spic'd.

SHIRLEY.

THE fame of Alice's beauty had by this time spread all over the place; she was the universal subject of interest and flattering remark. Melmont, when he next joined the *table d'hôte* at his boarding-house, heard her spoken of as the great object of attraction with

tacit pride, to feel that he possessed her affections. Ambition, however, being a reigning passion with him, it was not without a certain conflict in his breast, that he returned to a conversation with Mrs. Angus;—her fortune would have promoted views, which he panted to realise—a return to parliament—and an independence from all possible mischief ensuing from the malevolence of La Marre. These were considerations which made him feel that, in binding himself to Alice, he was giving up the dictates of prudence to the impulse of affection. However, in defiance of the sordidness of the world and its maxims, he gloried in showing his contempt for it, and being somewhat 'romantic,'—that is, following the dictates of affection, which is sneered at under the name of romance,—he soon crushed all struggle on the score of Mrs. Angus's fortune. They were conversing about Alice, who was the general theme of admiration.

"She even eclipses the exalted duchess who is here, as far as interest is concerned," said Melmont.

"Yis, that does she," replied O'Callaghan, "notwithstanding her grace does show so bravely in her diamonds."

"Diamonds may dazzle the sight, but Miss Lentworth's eyes dazzle the heart!"

"Ah, ye say rightly, Misther Melmont, do ye! Happy man are ye, to know the lady so well as ye do!"

"You know the Lentworths well, do you not?" asked the fair widow, slightly colouring, as she spoke, at perceiving the interest Melmont seemed to take in the fair subject of the present remarks.

O'Callaghan, who, we have already hinted, was a tacit admirer of the "widow," and only watched for an opportunity of becoming an avowed one, was, of course, not a little

pleased to think that he was likely now to get rid of so formidable a rival, whom he could tolerably well discern to be quite captivated by this superior beauty.

"My personal acquaintance with the Lentworths is not very long," replied Melmont, to the above inquiry of Mrs. Angus; "I know Sir Jasper chiefly as being an old friend of my father's."

"You danced with Miss Lentworth at the ball last Tuesday, did you not?" asked Mrs. Angus.

"Yes; she moves like a divinity—it is the very poetry of motion!"

"Indeed, you pay her a compliment!"

"It shall be a vary just one, faith!" interposed O'Callaghan; "Misther Melmont's a man of taste!"

"I never paid that compliment to any other human being I ever saw dance, but the Taglioni herself."

"What did you think of Miss Hollis?"

"She is considered to dress in great taste," said Mrs. Angus, not unwilling to turn the channel of remark from a person she rather regarded as a rival in engrossing the attention of our hero, to whom it has been plain enough to the reader, she had not been indifferent for some time; for if we have seen her heretofore taking the opposite side to our hero in conversation, in the general result she certainly sided with him—in liking him better than any other person who paid her attention.

Melmont expressed surprise at the remark of Mrs. Angus, complimentary to the dress of this Miss Hollis.

"Don't you admire her head-dress, *à la Greque?*"

"What, as suited to the figure of the wearer? so unclassically awkward?"

"Don't you like it?"

"A Greek head upon Gothic shoulders! that is all I can say for it!—judge whether I like it. You should look at Miss Lentworth if you wish to see a fine figure, and one worthy of a classical head-dress! What a pity it is people can't understand what best suits them in dress."

"You seem much captivated with Miss Lentworth."

"I was referring you to her, as an exemplification of good taste. How many persons, female as well as male, would look really well, if they would but wear what is most suited to their appearance, figure, height, complexion; but in striving to be in what they call in the '*mode*,' they cruelly mar God's work in their own images! and instead of appearing like decent Christians, and well-conditioned

withal, look like mad masqueraders, scarecrows, and dressed up apes!"

"What, are you such an opponent to the style of the day! I thought you were the very pink of what was *comme il faut!* an authority on the subject!"

"I am only an enemy to the 'fashion,' as it is called, when it tends merely to disfigure a person, and render him, or her, ridiculous; most especially in the case of ladies, for, from the respect and love I bear the sex, it grieves me more to see them disentitle themselves to those worthy attributes of admiration and respect, which are their very birthright and 'fee-simple' (as lawyers say,) from us their vassals—men. As to myself, as you have honoured me by a personal appeal, I am always glad to conform to the fashion when it suits me, and makes me look merely becoming; for I consider

it the duty of every one to pay all regard to his person, so as to make himself as decent,—as attractive as possible; it is a debt he owes to civilised life and to society, as much so as foppery, coxcombry, and effeminacy should be avoided as contemptible; and when I find the existing fashion does not answer this object, I take a style adopted by my own taste, and have in not a few instances been flattered by seeing it followed by others."

"You are quite a critic in matters of taste, we all know," said Mrs. Angus. Meantime O'Callaghan stared at our hero. The Irishman, indeed, had exalted notions of Melmont's being a "man of fashion," as he called it, and the ludicrous air which the awe of the Patlander now imparted to him, would have amused the sourest of the sour.

"What think you of the herd of visiters here?"

"Why, that there's a great crowd of them, and some few who pass——"

"There are not many *distingué* looking persons," rejoined the widow.

"Very few indeed: it is surprising how few one ever sees any where! those who bear that lofty, intelligent, and dignified, yet chaste demeanour combined, that awes vulgar people, and creates liking and respect in all minds."

"What think ye of the party we see, ginerally spaking, on the Promenade?" interposed O'Callaghan.

"I think," said Melmont, "that if there are some very respectable looking people, there is also a vast mass of the rubbish of humanity as well; and if you wished to stock a Zoological Garden at Cheltenham, there are plenty of outlandish looking animals to assist in effecting the undertaking"

"Faith, ye'll be satirical, Misther Melmont, and I know nothing more amusing than a little innocent quizzing after all!"

"So as there is no ill nature," answered Melmont; "besides, it is all fair, quizzing a little by way of retaliation; for every man must stand the chance of being quizzed by some one or other, who is either jealous, or does not approve of him."

"Oh, there is no harm in it, as long as good-humour is not lost sight of," said Mrs. Angus.

"I always wish to be good-humoured," answered Melmont, "even in return for ill-natured ridicule on the part of others; for, to treat their remarks seriously, and show oneself hurt, would only be to give force to them, and flatter those who meant to give offence: by laughing with them, and at oneself, one blunts the edge of their shafts."

"Nay, ye spake like a wise man, and a thorough christian into the bargain; for my part, I care not who quizzes me," continued O'Callaghan, pulling up his huge collars, till they nearly reached his eyes; "people are welcome to amuse themselves at my expense if they will. To create amusement is doing some good to society; and it is all fair, for I never go on the Promenade without indulging myself in a little, good-humoured pleasantry, faith it's true." (By-the-by, O'Callaghan always used to go down to the Promenade in the morning with the hope of falling in with Mrs. Angus and paying her attention.)

"Ah, I thought I saw you there the other evening, at the last musical promenade; you looked as if you had lost something."

"Yes, faith had I! In walking up from the street to the Promenade, I found that my pocket had been picked!"

"You seemed in a quandary; and observing you pull your pocket about so, I was in doubt whether your pocket had been picked, or whether you were picking a quarrel with your pocket!"

"Shall I tell you how it was?" said O'Callaghan, opening wide his gooseberry eyes as if he had something important to relate.

"How?" answered Melmont, evincing as much interest in his manner and enunciation of the monosyllable as he could.

"Why, I'll jist tell ye now: as I was coming from the street, d'ye see, up to the promenade, I saw a fellow with a tiliscope, so I thought I'd have a peep at the moon, and see if I could diskiver any of the turnpike roads, and hills and lakes on its surface, ay and timples, that the German stargazers say they can see; and bad luck to 'em, a pack of romancers, for bamboozling

me so! for I got my pocket picked while I was looking out for the highroad to the capital of the Lunarian Kingdom, did I! Bad luck to the light-fingered rogue who took advantage of my attitude."

"A very 'moon-stricken attitude,' indeed," answered Melmont, laughing. "I'll tell you what *I* did once in passing a fellow in town, one fine moonlight night, who looked very much like one of the light-fingered gentry, and wanted me to have a peep, that he might treat me as you were treated, while star-gazing."

"What did you do?"

"Why, in order to disappoint him, I asked him what his charge for peeping was? he told me one penny. I told him I had only a half-penny, and therefore begged him to let me have 'half a peep!'"

"Ah, ah, ye did well!" cried O'Callaghan,

laughing, "I wish I had had wit enough to have done the same; I wish, faith, I'd had yir sharpness on the occasion. Didn't the fellow let you have your 'half peep' for the good joke ye uttered, which was worth a whole peep gratis!"

"Not he, a knave! he was too matter of fact when disconcerted, perhaps, in his light-fingering scheme; though I wonder he didn't let me have my half peep, and gain his point of picking my pockets; he thought I was too much on my guard, doubtless—'no flat,' as he would have called it—so I left him gaping, with the star-gazers and pickpockets about him, in the full triumph of my joke, which had gained me a certain eclat with the 'mobility' around—so off I went, money and handkerchief safe."

Whilst our hero and O'Callaghan and the fair widow were thus chatting amicably together,

a gentleman asked the former to drink wine: this was no other than Mr. Fleming, already mentioned in our third chapter as distinguished for being a "bore," in an everlasting recurrence to the only two subjects he seemed acquainted with, and at that period * exciting attention, viz. "Reform and the Cholera." The reader has doubtless, in looking back to that period, not unfrequently fallen in with such a character, and will perhaps smile at the recollection, which does to hang a joke upon as well as any other peg. Melmont knew there would be no escaping the persecution of Mr. Fleming, and his chief object now was to turn aside the subject as dexterously and humorously as he could; so he put himself on the defensive, in order to parry the menaced thrusts.

* See the Dedication, p. I.

Having gone through the form of wine-drinking, Mr. Fleming commenced the attack.

We should first observe, that Melmont had been saying something to Mrs. Angus about sitting up late at parties, "turning night into day," as he called it; and expressed his intention, whilst at Cheltenham, of "reforming himself." Any sound like "reform" was certain not to escape the ears of Mr. Fleming; and it was with the view to bring up his favourite subject that he had asked Melmont to drink wine, and so enter into conversation; accordingly, the said Mr. F. pricked up his ears, and proceeded to observe as follows:—"You were talking, I think, unless I was mistaken, of some measure in the Reform question—was it any amendment, might I ask, moved in the course of the debate? or——"

"Oh, I was talking of a much more important

matter, to me at least, than the Reform Bill!" answered Melmont.

"Indeed!—what can that be?—the abolition of tithes?"

"Oh, no! that is a trifle compared with it!"

"Of the East India Company's charter, perhaps?"

"As far from it," retorted Melmont, "as the poles are asunder, as magnanimity is from old Polignac, as liberality from the citizen king."

"Indeed?"

"Ay, as foreign to it as 'Flowers of Rhetoric' are to a dry statement in law; as blue ribands to dress a pig in; or a pink gauze slip to decorate the tub-like rotundity of a Hottentot Venus!"

Mrs. Angus could not help smiling, together with some ladies near her, at our hero's innocent quizzing of the tiresome Mr. Fleming. O'Callaghan had grinned tremendously, and now

nearly burst out laughing; however, he crammed the napkin between his horse teeth, and thus impeded any ill-bred utterance of his mirth. Meantime poor Fleming, "bothered and flabbergasted," as O'Callaghan would say, proceeded in the expression of his innocent surprise.—"What can this important matter be?—the Corn Laws, perhaps?"

"Nothing so trivial!" continued the merciless Melmont.

"Trivial call you that?—well then, the Bank of England charter——"

"Nothing so frivolous! nothing about 'debt' or dividends—Jews, or jobbers—Bank or bankruptcy!"

"Why, gracious heavens! what can it be?" said this glorious wiseacre, opening his eyes more widely, and pricking up his ears with increased attention; "I have it—I have it!—the Repeal of the Union!"

"No! no! no! no!" exclaimed Melmont, shaking his head and laughing, everybody round joining with him, at the expense of Mr. F. "Slave Emancipation, then!" said Fleming, kindling generously in the hope of at last having won the point, and run through the catalogue of "important questions."

"No, my dear sir, no; you are still very far from the matter—it is something much more important even than this."

"Well, then, what can it be?" exclaimed Mr. F., growing almost exasperated at rummaging so long in vain to find out this riddle.

"Why not the Reform Bill," said Melmont, at last unravelling the enigma, and quieting the excitement of poor Fleming into an undignified state of sulkiness, "but the reform of ——myself!"

A chorus of well-regulated laughter succeeded this conclusion of Melmont's harassment of

Fleming, by way of a winding up to the scene; as Homer describes in Olympus amongst the gods, whose wrangling the "limping Lord of Lemnos" appeases by some good wine and a joke.

"Well! you have mentioned at last indeed an important matter, and worthy a good Christian, though the joke is but at second hand," said Mrs. A——, smiling.

Melmont smiled too as he replied—"It is seldom I hope, that I would wish to pass off the joke of another as my own: but there was such a fair opportunity for introducing this, that I could not forbear doing so, apologising to Tom Burnet * for the plagiarism."

* The answer of Tom Burnet to the bishop, his father, when he told the latter he was meditating a greater work than his Lordship's History of the Reformation, was, "The Reformation of myself." The alteration from this in the text is but slight.

"And made it your own by introducing it so well," cried O'Callaghan. "By the powers!" he continued, lowering his tone, "I never was more relieved than to find that dry and tough subject of Reform, washed down with so well applied a pleasantry; faith, it's a dry morsel, and difficult to swallow, and stuck in my throat like an ould crust!"

"I think, however, for a patriot,—as I would wish the good electors of ——— to think me,—that my saying the reform of myself is matter of greater importance to me than that of my country is rather selfish."

"Yes, yes!" said Mrs. A——, smiling, "in earnest it would be!"

"Earnest or not, we'll forgive ye," said O'Callaghan, laughing.

Mr. Fleming had by this time rallied somewhat from his overthrow and its consequent

mood of 'sulks,' and would have given cogent symptoms of his recovery by commencing his other favourite topic, the cholera, courting another exposure; he was however prevented by the interposition of a gentleman not much more gifted than himself,—an invalid, who was remarkable for asking questions; so that Melmont, in escaping from one bore, only fell into the clutches of another. "*Incidit in Scyllam qui vult vitare Charybdin.*" However, he made up his mind to bear this attack as well as he trusted he should have borne that of the "cholera," just threatened.

The old catechiser, whose name was Cobb, commenced very deliberately by asking—"Pray, sir, have you ever been at Leamington? eh?"

"Yes," replied Melmont, "in fact, I went over from this place to Leamington, the other day, to see one or two friends."

"Will you then allow me to ask—uh, uh! (Mr. Cobb was annoyed by a 'short cough')—first—" but here, unfortunately for the spirit of this very 'laudable' inquiry, the string of questions was broken short off, at this very first link, by the females rising to leave table: however, as the reader may be curious to see the continuation of the catechising after the interruption had subsided and the gentlemen resumed their seats, we will pursue it in the succeeding chapter. It may not be amiss to remark that after dinner prosy and droning geniuses give the fullest scope to these propensities, there being no period so inspiring to the soul of gossip as this, it being the chartered period *par excellence* 'for chatting over the bottle.'

CHAPTER XI.

THE NERVOUS GENTLEMAN.

I parried all his queries with a jest.
MASSINGER.

"I THINK, sir," said Mr. Cobb, repeating the question he had made a moment before, "I think you said you had been at Leamington?"

"Yes," said Melmont, "I have just mentioned having gone over there."

"Exactly so—permit me, therefore, to put one or two little questions to you."

"By all means!—What an unconscionable proser this man is!" added Melmont to himself.

"Why, sir, you know, I have been for some time past a martyr to a very sad nervous complaint."

"I do *not* 'know,'" said Melmont to himself, —"vile expression this—fraught with cockneyism!"

"And I wish you to inform me, first, if you could recommend the place to me; secondly, who is the principal physician in it; thirdly, what his system is;—I'm sure, I beg your pardon for giving so much trouble!"

"Oh, not at all!"

"Fourthly, how far Leamington is from Cheltenham;"—("fifthly," interposed Melmont to himself, "how many brickbats there are in each house!")—fifthly, how far it is from War-

wick; and sixthly, and lastly, whether you think I shall like it as well as Cheltenham?"

"And to conclude," added Melmont, in Dogberry's words, "you would ask me to tell you anything and everything else further than what you have already asked, should it occur to you, and be worth while mentioning."

"Sir, you are very kind."

"I will give you all the information I can," replied Melmont, with a mock gravity and seeming interest for his *malade* catechiser, which promised that he was bent on affording himself the indulgence of a little delicate quizzing, at the expense of his troublesome interlocutor.—"Well," continued Melmont, "I believe you will give me credit, in the first place, for being seriously concerned at your extreme nervous affection: it is dreadful; leads to the worst consequences; is the

most difficult thing imaginable to be cured, and the most never-to-be-sufficiently-lamented complaint among the most-worthily-denounced and justly-execrated disorders in the black catalogue of human afflictions—ahem!" Melmont took breath in the middle of this purposely unmeaning harangue, while Cobb stared with silent awe and expectation.

"Ahem!—then, Mr. Cobb," resumed his sage adviser, "pray pay attention; I shall unfold to you the great Leamingtonian system."

"The great Leamingtonian system!" exclaimed Cobb, his feeble soul shuddering at the importance of the term, and his eyes distended wider than before.

"Yes, sir, the great Leamingtonian system,—if you are in this direfully-dangerously-declining predicament of nervous prostration, your only

hope, your only hope is to fly to Leamington, and put yourself instantly under the hands of the great Doctor Pharamond *."

"The great Doctor Pharamond!" ejaculated Cobb, with increased awe.

"The great Doctor Pharamond, grand projector and supporter of the mighty system I shall unfold. In speaking of Pharamond, sir, I must inform you he is no every-day man; he is an original in his way, seriously a man of great discernment as to systems and habits of mind as well as of body, so mind, you must play no tricks with him; a *malade imaginaire* is sure to come off second best with this acute observer of the truth in a variety of complaints and ailings—so

* We need not explain to the sagacious reader who Doctor Pharamond is. The portrait is sufficiently strong; any pleasantry relative to his manner and treatment that may hereafter appear, is perfectly good-humouredly meant.

I presume your complaint is not in the least a fancy, or woe betide you!"

Cobb cried "Oh! no, no!" and groaned as if he had seen a ghost.

Our hero continued.

"Then, Mr. Cobb,—ahem! . . . What do you think he'll say when you go to him?" said Melmont hastily, and raising his voice at the same time, which made poor Cobb start; "you don't know, I dare say," he continued, scarcely able to suppress a smile at Cobb's trepidation, "you don't know, I dare say——"

"No, indeed!" murmured the subdued Cobb.

"No, I thought not!—I'll be bound you did not—well, I'll tell you—ahem! . . . . You like mutton chops?" said Melmont, resuming the hasty mode of address.

"Ye-es—mutton chops—ye-es," replied the

invalid, with hesitation and wonder truly effective.

"That is as it should be!" then suddenly again he turned on Cobb. "You don't object to good golden-coloured sherry, ah?—liquid amber, eh?—strong bodied, um?—you don't object to this, I presume?"

"Not at all!" replied Cobb, his amazement by no means on the decline.

"Good, again!" said Melmont; "in fact, you like good eating and drinking; that is just as it ought to be: perhaps you have some hypochondriac affection at the same time, that makes you quarrel with your dinner, and lose your appetite?—no?—so much the better;—if you had all would be cured. Go to Pharamond —to Pharamond go!—he will, with the great nostrums of sherry and mutton chops, drive the enemy of complaint from his strong hold in your

system, and make him beat a retreat in no time—in a syllable of time!"

Cobb stared for a moment, and then ejaculated "Indeed!—is that all to cure a nervous disorder like mine?"

"Oh no, that is not all."

"Ah! I thought not!" said Cobb, not liking to have the importance of his complaints treated so cavalierly as to be washed away with a glass of sherry, or the grievance swallowed as easily as a mutton chop.

"What more should you think will be recommended you?—you don't know, I dare say?"

"No, indeed?"

"Well, I'll e'en impart it to you, and pray give attention—when you eat the aforesaid mutton chop put half the contents of the salt-cellar on your plate, don't let a grain escape. Eat the chop thus salted, and your whole

system will be so seasoned, pickled, and preserved, that you will be a new man, after it—regenerate. You may fling away your crutch and scamper!"

"Oh!" groaned Cobb, turning the whites of his eyes up to the ceiling—"Is that all?"

"*Ignotum omne pro magnifico.* When I talked to you of the great Leamingtonian system, this and nothing more, (as to diet, at least,) than this,—is the pith and marrow of it. This system in physics is as famous now as the Lockeian system in metaphysics, or the Newtonian in experimental philosophy."

"You are joking," at last exclaimed Cobb, after a pause.

"Upon my word I am not," said Melmont, "nay so far from feeling a propensity to joke at the system itself, I much admire both it and Pharamond who prescribes it. I certainly

am amused at the amazement of invalids in discrediting that they can be cured by such simple means; now the beauty of this treatment of Pharamond in my mind, is its harmlessness and simplicity. I'll tell you a story. A gentleman, six feet four inches high, and broad in proportion, once went to Pharamond with the complaint, that in a certain number of hours after breakfast, he felt sensible of a vast vacuity of feeling, accompanied by a kind of ominous growling or grumbling, or both, in the caverns of his inward fabric. What do you think was rigidly prescribed to him under such circumstances?"

"I can't really determine!"

"A pound of beef-steaks!—was ever any better remedy for the said emptiness complained of; the inward man did but cry out for proper repletion—this was the language of that por-

tentous grumbling and growling, and never was any remedy simpler. Our Patagonian invalid was his own man again! in fact the simplest remedies are ever the best. I knew a lady who was cured of the cramp by putting a piece of cork into her bed when she slept; this effectually stopped her ailings. I knew another simple, but not so agreeable a remedy, this was the swallowing a live spider to cure the 'Rheumatics!' Positive facts—if I were to turn Physician, I should introduce music as an infallible sedative in most cases, as acting on the nervous system of sensation; for digestion, the effect of sound is astonishing. A gentleman or lady of weak and uncertain digestion, ought always to have a guitar by him or her, touch a chord or two, and it is ten to one but some chord or another will produce the sympathy in the nervous

system to set the nerves of the stomach in action, and bring round the desired object. You see what a thing it is to have a little knowledge of anatomy! I have recommended this to various friends, and have found it completely answer. All my friends amongst the invalids of the fairer sex, have adopted this, as an elegant and lady-like mode of treatment, as effective as it is agreeable: I call this my system, the original Melmontian system, and if I were to take out a diploma from the College at Edinburgh I have no doubt, by pursuing this original method, I should soon be a celebrated man."

"Mr. Melmont you astonish me! then you do really advise me to go to Dr. Pharamond? and you do *really* think highly of him? why can't I order a mutton-chop without going to him?"

"Sir," said Melmont gravely, "I would not advise you to go to Pharamond, if I did not conscientiously esteem him a great physician. You fall into the error of all patients (or *im*patients) when informed of a particular system—namely, that you can pursue it yourself, without the supervision of a medical man! Pshaw! *Galimatias! nugæ! flummery, rigmarole!* craziness! be ruled by me, don't doctor yourself; Pharamond will accompany the chops with a prescription be assured, and the shower-bath—be not infatuated—or why ask my serious advice?"

Cobb shrunk abashed—while O'Callaghan here interposed, and said "that Pharamond was all the talk in Ireland, was he!" saying which he sunk again into silence, gaping with his "potaty-trap" open, and his eyes staring, for Melmont's philosophical disserta-

tion, on the benefit of simple treatment, as the best, and his own musical hypothesis for relieving nervous disorders and indigestion, formed a matter of very serious interest to the listeners round, besides that they were afforded entertainment by the amazement of poor Cobb — the patient.

"But again I warn you," resumed Melmont "to go to Pharamond with no imaginary ailing; he will send you to the right about in a 'twinkling!' he is always on the *qui-vive* to detect idle whims and fancies, and never seeks to flatter the weakness of a patient by humouring these idle whims. His talent is too high, and his duty too serious, generally speaking, to admit of his wasting his time in listening to silly caprices, and moonshine foolery. He likes as a general rule, moreover, to make people fancy themselves better than they are, knowing

what an effect fancy—or rather the mind—has on the body, and also, he likes still more, his applicants not to fancy themselves ill, and, by so doing, make themselves ill, when they are perfectly well."

"He is very wise," said Cobb—"I shall indeed follow your advice, in going to consult him, it is *high* time I should—I have had, come next Michaelmas, this nervous complaint on me eight-and-thirty years. Perhaps, now, as to my *other* little inquiries, you would have the goodness——"

"To despatch the remainder of the information you required—with the greatest pleasure—the next question of *importance*, I think you asked was how far Leamington is from Warwick? this is doubtless important, as perhaps you contemplate the walk as exercise for your health, strength, and being, in which is in-

cluded your preservation to your family and to society,—time for repentance of sins, and purification for eternal salvation; the most important results depend on the question doubtless. Well, Sir, should you go by *one* way you will find the distance as much as three miles all but a furlong — but by the *other*, which is the high road, ten to one but you'll find it little more than two miles; *vide* mile stone.....above all, loiter not long at Warwick!"

"Why so?" exclaimed Cobb, alarmed.

"What, is the cholera there?" interposed the old gentleman, whose ideas we have seen to be so tyrannically monopolised by this engrossing subject.

"Not exactly cholera, but a demon almost as imperious, if not quite so blue; that is, the malady designated 'Blue Devils'—in other words, hypochondria, dumps, vapours, aceticism,

and mopishness. Such are the affections with which the atmosphere of that respectable and ancient, but most inveterately sulky and dull city, is impregnated. In fact, if you wish to be rendered an invalid, so as to be qualified for a visit to Leamington, you have nothing to do but to take up your abode at Warwick for a fortnight, or even ten days would be enough, to give you a confirmed attack of dyspepsia, and render you as desolate as Selkirk on the barren island, and as fretful as a cynical old bachelor jaundiced with disappointment! Warwick in fact is as dull as London is in the recess, when there is nobody in town but a scavenger and a minister!—drudges both, from the top of the social scale to the bottom! Verily, extremes meet!"

O'Callaghan grinned, Cobb stared, and Melmont, in order to take breath a little, relieved

himself by drinking a glass of wine, and speaking to a friend, who was sitting next to him, about the paces of a horse the other had just purchased; and, thus engaged, he was almost forgetting he had still some more of Cobb's impertinences to answer, when, suddenly recollecting himself, he turned to the inquisitor, and resumed, with a due air of importance, his expected communication.

"I rather think—yes—I am right. I rather think—*hem*—you desired, in the next place, to know (as far as my own humble views of the question are concerned) whether I liked Cheltenham better than Leamington. This, sir, is perhaps the most important of all the questions you have required me to solve. It involves reflections which call forth much feeling—much philosophy! Ah, Mr. Cobb, this *is* an important, a *touching* question, to a bosom, as

yours must be, sensitive, and alive to the better sympathies that sway our nature." . . . . . Cobb stared, and Melmont suppressed a smile; O'Callaghan giggled, and then endavoured to look grave. . . . . "To a mind alive to, and actuated by the finer and more delicate associations, as yours is, what place, however intrinsically dull in itself, is not remembered with pleasure, with fondness — is not viewed with gratification—which holds those in it who are our friends? To me, therefore, Leamington is endeared from this cause, as it would be to you."

Cobb scarcely suppressed the rising sigh. This was an appeal to his sensibilities—this was touching his nerves;—it overcame him. . . . . "Yes, Mr. Cobb, on this account to me, individually, Leamington — quiet and almost dull as it is — is more agreeable than the whole giddy phantasmagoria of gaiety that

floats past me at this gayest and merriest of places! In another point of view, however, and without these associations, if your object is to be gay, remain at Cheltenham. The constitution of the place is gaiety, the atmosphere breathes this and nothing else. People come here to be gay, and because they consider the place a resort of 'fashion,' as it is termed. As for Leamington, it is quiet in itself, has very pretty drives about it, has many objects of interest around it, has excellent baths and stronger saline than Cheltenham—so the *vrai malade*—the invalid—resorts most wisely to Leamington; and you see the greater proportion of people there come to get well and be cured—invalids *de bonne foi*."

This was quite enough for Cobb. He could not suppress his anxiety to declare how much he was in favour of a spot where the truly

indisposed resorted. He felt himself out of his element where he was. What! a man with a nervous affection of "eight and thirty years standing, come next Michaelmas," to remain in a vortex of mere noisy gaiety, in a place that little became the character of valetudinarianism —the delicate dignity of confirmed indisposition! Not a moment more was to be lost. Cobb grasped the hand of our hero—did not wish to trouble him with any more questions on the point. To join the phalanx of the sick and infirm—the jaundiced, the splenetic, the be-mulligrubbed and be-devilled—was his earnest intention. To Dr. Pharamond his wishes led him, and so the back of the illustrious Cobb was soon turned on the "receding walls of Cheltenham."

We may just add one word, as to the dulness or otherwise of places. Particular spots are often censured as dull and stupid by people

without cause, and without considering what their own dispositions and qualifications for enlivening life, and the scene, or the society about them, may be. Such a man as Cobb might have stayed at Cheltenham, and would never have known it to be gay. So dull was he himself, that wherever he went the spot to him could have little gaiety extracted from it. This is the secret of the dulness imputed to many places. However, Cobb had been informed he was in a gay place, and he did right to believe the information, though we would lay a wager that he, or those like him, would find the dullest place in the world not very much more so than the gayest, so completely, on some constitutions, are the sources of excitement lavished in vain.

CHAPTER XII.

"JACK AND GILL"—THE MATRON AND HER SCHOLARS—BEING A SAGE WORD ON A GRAND SUBJECT FOR THE GOOD OF FAMILIES.

Bring a child up in the way it should walk.

PROVERBS.

Jack and Gill went up the hill,
To fetch a pail of water;
Jack fell down and broke his crown,
And Gill came tumbling after.

OLD SONG.

THE Lansdown party set out next day, according to Lady Lentworth's appointment, for the purpose of putting little Agnes to

school. Sir Jasper and herself were in the carriage with the child, and Melmont and Alice, as usual, rode together; and, to say the truth, rather promoted these little expeditions, in order to find opportunities for conversation, and those sweet outpourings of the heart, that constitute the dearest and fleetest moments of this chequered life. They were now affianced to each other—for though our hero's embarrassments—nay, his desperate situation—when he considered what La Marre's villany might possibly do—(and which, as will be seen in a chapter or two hence, was going forwards towards its completion), made him waver as to whether a *liaison* of prudence would not be most advisable in his circumstances—yet, as was said before, he loved too much to be able to calculate. He had only to look in Alice's face, and read her love in her bright beaming eyes—to find that they shone

brighter than gold, and that her approval was dearer than all the objects of Ambition.

The carriage now arrived at the door of the Establishment. The old woman, who conducted it, came herself to the door at the summons of the bell, when the servant announced to her Lady Lentworth's name. She was a decent and matronly, though somewhat antiquated, looking body. At her waist she wore a girdle, with a huge bunch of keys attached to it, exhibiting herself in quality of warder of every room, closet, and outhouse in the premises. A portentous cap, towered above her "august front," more resembling the crest of a cockatoo than any thing else—a cockatoo of the lemon-crested kind, seeing that the said cap was crowned with ribands of that delicate colour. A chintz gown, of capaciously bulging drapery, enveloped a figure of no very slight proportions;

a complete specimen, truly, of what is called a "matronly person,"—and, "a personable body." A huge bordering of lace fringed her dress about the neck, coming nearly up to the chin and head, and having almost the appearance of a collar. The good dame's countenance bore convincing marks of having been soured in the course of disciplining the brats committed to her care; albeit, her visage was not so contracted and crabbed as Shenstone represents that of his school-mistress. The "crows' feet," however, under her eyes were deeply marked, and though she grinned at present as complacently as she could, it was plain to see, the grin was not customary and looked more like the ludicrous ruefulness exhibited at sight of an apothecary's potion under the nose, than the complacent smile it was intended—as an apology—for. Her complexion was a red and brown mixture; of

the same colour, indeed, and much about the same pattern as the chintz dress of dandy grey, mixed with red, which she wore. The nose was distinguished by a becoming flush, eminent above that of the cheeks. She wore spectacles, and altogether presented a very imposing appearance, as need scarcely be observed after the above description; to which, however, we should remember to add, the dignity of some grizzled, or pepper-and-salt coloured locks, seen protruding in one or two stiff curls from under an enormous awning of lace that bordered her cap. Being, at present, in her most amiable mood, as was befitting—she was all anxiety to explain, show, recommend, and "go over" every thing about the establishment, for the satisfaction of her distinguished visiters.

"Pray walk in, your Ladyship," she said, making a low curtsey, "and let me show you

round the house; I trust you will find things to your liking—and——"

So, in she waddled in the midst of her speech, as Lady Lentworth followed with Alice, Sir Jasper, and our hero bringing up the rear.

After going over the house, and inspecting the dinner-room, school-room, dormitory, and all that was to be seen, Lady L. and the whole party expressing, of course, their gratification at all they saw, her ladyship asked the good dame about her scholars.

"Have you any particularly clever children in your school? it is made up, I believe, of boys and girls, up to nine or ten years old?"

"Just so, your Ladyship: there is one room for the boys, of which I have some older than nine. I have another room for girls, too, who are somewhat older; and as to their cleverness, I have one or two 'pretty sharpish,' which

'take' to their learning readily enough; but I'm obliged to use a great deal of persuasion with others to get them to learn anything; particularly the boys, (although the younger set of the two), who are the most 'contradictablest,' your Ladyship, of little reptiles, as ever I came near, that I must say."

This was evidently a most exciting subject with the old lady, whose nerves became a little agitated, no doubt, when recounting the humours and obstinacies of a set of dull urchins, into whose brains she was obliged to drum the "London Primer," or "Child's Own Book."

Lady Lentworth condoled with her on the trouble which it must cause her; "But then," said her ladyship, "you must be sometimes repaid by the progress that some make, and reflect credit on you and the establishment!"

"Why—yes; I don't mean to say that I'm

not gratified occasionally by the praises I hear—*that* I may say, of my establishment, at times; but one pays a heavy tax for this small portion of satisfaction," added the lady of the lemon-cockatoo crest, with a groan.

"Ah, this is the lot of all in this life!" said Melmont, in a sympathising whimper, which nearly provoked the expression of certain risible propensities in the party. "I suppose," he added, "you are necessitated to use coercive measures occasionally, to induce your scholars to do themselves and you credit, so gratifying to both."

"Yes, sir, I really am obliged to resort to certain modes of punishment, at times; but I'm decidedly averse to beating the poor things. I find the best way is to coax them into obedience."

"It certainly may be more agreeable to your

feelings, and assuredly does credit to your humanity," replied Melmont; "but I think, on the whole, it is rather a dangerous principle for children to be imbued with, namely, that they won't do anything without being bribed to do it. They should be made to understand that it is their duty to do whatever is imposed upon them, without any reward; and that if they do not, they must be punished by some proper means."

"Well, sir, I think what you say is right, as a general principle; but the great object with me is, to get them to do anything at all, by any means. The lenient way which I adopt gives me some trouble, I confess: but I had rather spoil or humour the children a little, than have them say of me, I was severe, when they went home."

The gentler disposition of Lady Lentworth

and Alice was rather inclined to applaud the doctrine of the good dame; but Sir Jasper and Melmont adhered to the sterner code laid down by the latter, at least generally speaking, as a plan of incitement to improvement; though, at this young age, perhaps, the old woman was, after all, not wrong. Even in its tenderest years, however, it may be questioned whether it is not mischievous to humour a child, in order to make it do anything; for it is sowing the seeds of waywardness, which, from earliest infancy, should be most safely eradicated; for the bad seed too soon takes root, and then the difficulty is to weed it out—to do which, the portion of punishment would be doubled. Surely it is a mercy to the child to anticipate this future double penalty, and consequently a good to do so. In fact, this one point, namely, the principle of incitement in education, on which

the good dame, and Melmont appear to be somewhat at issue, has occasioned more disputation amongst those who have spoken and written on education, than we are inclined to bestow upon it, or than, indeed, is allowable for us. The world has scarcely ever been deluged with more treatises and essays on any subject, (not excepting even the early controversies on religion,) than this of education—early education. Rousseau's genius was employed upon it for a length of time, as the world knows from his "Emile;" in which some of the most impracticable rules are laid down that it is possible to conceive. Madame de Genlis has written on it, and many great philosophers of antiquity, down to the present time. There is no subject of more vital importance, as Plato well said of old; for upon training the child, and upon the method of instructing it—according

as this is good or bad—the genius, disposition, character, and principle of the future man almost entirely depend. We are speaking with reference as much to the formation of character, as with respect to talent or improvement. As the child turns out well or ill, according to his training and instruction, society and himself are gainers or otherwise; not to one or two particular instances of splendid genius or inveterate dulness, which either spurn all rules in the one instance, or are too barren to improve by anything in the other. To sum the matter up shortly, it may be said, that the great thing in early youth, and the most important point, perhaps, in the education of a young child, is to mind its health, as a foundation to any strength or brilliancy, perhaps, of mind. However clever it may turn out subsequently, if it is nervous from having been early weak, ill, too

much coddled and physicked, it never will be able to do its talent justice. Even the mighty B——— (to cite a splendid instance before every body) may thank Heaven for an astonishing strength of constitution—of physical powers —for enabling his talent to effect so much, and at so little expense of health and strength, as he has done. The first thing, then, is to make a child as strong and as healthy as possible. The next, not to attempt to cram it with too many things by way of making it "forward;" but to make it learn well and thoroughly what you teach it. To induce it to learn—the great point of difficulty—you must first of all study well the child's disposition, and see what methods are best adapted to controul it. The stricter coercion, which may be available with a very bold and forward disposition, would frighten a more delicate child, and, ten to one,

render it an idiot. Above all, make it sensible of kind treatment, or it may give the child a character of savageness, or selfishness, or moroseness through life; imbue it with a sense of right —of its duty—accordingly as it is a sensitive child, or alive to impressions or not; act on it by moral appeals to its sense of shame or pride: it will scarcely fail to be affected, though the most wayward, by these appeals. Curtailing it of some privilege which other children are allowed, degrades it in its own esteem;—it is the very same principle as that which acts so effectually upon older — on grown-up, and more hardened, and refractory children—namely, ridicule — mockery. Men shrink from ridicule, degraded, abashed, discomfited, and penitent, when they will acknowledge the effect of no other coercion: so with children — that is, on the same principle.

We now follow up that to which we have already alluded. With reference to the instruction given to a child, we say, let it keep up what it knows; let it learn those things to which it shows a decided predilection; and, in other respects, let it learn what is really most useful generally, and, in particular, what may be most useful to itself. These rules apply to the whole progress of education, and, if attended to, form a sufficient code of principles. We, who are writing this, are not going to launch out here into any more lengthened remarks on education, as practised in our schools and colleges, having already, at different times, laid our sentiments on the subject before the public, and beg to acknowledge its kind attention. All we shall permit ourselves to say, is, that there is still, in many instances, much room for improvement on the

antiquated methods, which, in many instances, again, on the other hand, we are happy to see discarded. How the unimproved instances can contemplate the superiority of the improved, and still consent to lag behind in the good path, we are at a loss to understand. If any of our readers should ask us to point out a good system of education—as to instruction, we could not refer him to a much better than that adopted by Dr. Arnold. He educates boys as if they were born in the nineteenth century, and as living since the promulgation of improved science,—an extended fraternity in, and communication amongst, nations—a more enlightened moral philosophy—in the æra of a Dugald Stewart,—ably followed up, by-the-by, and corrected, by Wilson. In fact, it is idle now, for those who contemplate the progress of improvement and instruction amongst the people of England, by

the diffusion of knowledge through the press, to think of suffering their offspring to halt along after the march of improvement on the old track of the monkish cloister and antiquated rubbish of the schools. In fact, less time must be wasted than there still is on the dead languages, through the whole course of college and school education, and more must be given up to that which fits men for the enlightened age in which they are now born.

But one word shall we permit ourselves to add, on a most interesting,—universally interesting,—topic. Having just touched on the subject of improvement of the people, and universal diffusion of knowledge, we will express but one word on this point, and then return to the good dame, and the party we have for the moment deserted. The most cruel mischief, then, of education, with respect to the lower

orders, is, where it instructs them above their station in life, for which, consequently, it utterly unfits them! and in doing this, frequently leaves them without the means of that honest support which they would otherwise have had, in the prosecution of some industrious and appropriate occupation. It has therefore been the cause of idleness, and hence of crime: and many crimes of design are the offspring of this race of educated idlers, who are too fastidious, lofty, and refined in ideas to stoop to work, and grovel in what are now considered degrading occupations—too poor and consequently unprovided to live honestly. It is argued by many, that education has diminished crime: as a general proposition, we should say such ought to be, and is its tendency; but that it has actually diminished crime in our state, we will merely say, is highly questionable—without a flatter con-

tradiction. We will grant that education has, in softening the mind, reduced crimes of barbarity and brutal outrage, perhaps—though we have still flagrant instances of these too often; but that it has not diminished the aggregate of crime, is evident; in as much as the increase of crime is greater in proportion than the increase of population. It is plain, of course, that destitution of circumstances from want of employment, the source of which evil is in political causes (and in no way to be referred to education, or its effects), will be a cause of crime: but putting this aside, the proposition is undeniable, that education, in raising the minds of the humbler classes above their station, must drive many to crime—by creating a distaste for meaner labours, and consequent idleness and destitution. The truth of this is sufficiently verified in the history of three parts

of the educated criminals tried every session in London. Political causes, we acknowledge, may have abandoned many to destitution; but too often, where this has not been the case, the distaste for labour, and idleness induced by the unhappy refinement we have mentioned, has been the cause, and no other! Many, on the other hand, education has profited, to improve, to stimulate to honest exertion, to combine the duties of a life of labour with an enlightenment of mind. We should be sorry if it were otherwise; we wish it were more general; we wish the unhappy instances we have exhibited on the other side of the question were less general. How many are afforded us in the wretched beings of both sexes with which our great Babylon swarms! Again, in the refinement of the mind—in those on whom we have been contemplating crime—from an educa-

tion disproportioned to their station, a keen sense of shame is awakened, which rouses and edges all the pangs of remorse, and renders that instruction a curse which, within proper bounds, and with a due regard to the station of life to be occupied, would have been a blessing. From this view alone, have we been regarding this important question, well-wishers as we are to the improvement of all classes, from highest to lowest.

To return to our party. "Now," said the good dame to Lady Lentworth, as she passed through the school-room, "there is a puzzle for your ladyship! Look at those two boys,—I call them 'Jack and Gill:' one is very slow and so dull that he can learn nothing till after a long time, while the other is so very quick that he can't stay to learn anything properly; he sees the thing at once, or fancies he sees it—

jumps at it, and tells a very plausible story about it. But in truth he has to be reminded of a variety of points that he had overlooked; so that by the time he learns a thing rightly and thoroughly, his slow cousin (who saw nothing on earth of the matter, while he saw it all as he thought) has got just as far as he has, and knows the thing equally soon!"

"Why this is the fable of the hare and the tortoise!" said Sir Jasper.

"Extremes meet in this instance, indeed!" said Melmont; "but it is a case which I have not unfrequently witnessed:" following up his remark by citing the famous lines placed at the head of the chapter, which excited the merriment of all the party on the occasion, not excepting the old lady with the lemon-cockatoo crest.

By this time all that was to be said, seen,

or done, was said, seen, and done: little Agnes Minton was left with the good dame, with a promise from Lady L. and Alice, as they kissed her on taking leave, that they would before long pay her a visit. Melmont added to this, that if he found her improved when he next called, he should give her some keepsake to wear for him. And so this interesting expedition ended—as public dinners do, where there is no lack of turtle, iced-punch, venison, or champagne—"much to the satisfaction" (such is the important language of the reports) of all parties present.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN INSIGHT INTO THE TRUTH OF SUNDRY MATTERS; OR, AN EVENING AT LANSDOWNE.

Honour calls—I must obey;
Love to glory must give way.
OLD SEA SONG.

THIS evening Melmont cut the table d'hôte, and dined *en famille* with the party at Lansdowne. Sir Jasper was glad to have an opportunity of conversing with the son of his old

friend about various projects on entering the arena of life and its public stage.

"With so much less local interest than your opponent," said Sir Jasper, "it was bold in you to undertake the poll. I dare say you now rather regret the loss of money, than otherwise, which it must have entailed on you. I know I regret my losses," added the knight, lowering his voice, with a demi-serious, demi-ludicrous air.

"I'm no advocate, indeed," replied Melmont, "for throwing away money carelessly; but, in this instance, I scarcely regret what I have hazarded. Promotion, no less than experience, can only be gained by being paid for; and if I have lost my election this time, I consider myself as having gone some way towards securing my return in the next contest. I am certain I am popular amongst the electors of ——; and

I consider myself, now, as having a 'vested interest' in the hearts of the knaves—the greater proportion of them. Many voted against their will for my opponent; but his superior local influence, from property, will not save his return next time."

"Talk of their stomachs and not their hearts," said Sir Jasper, laughing; "pay them a visit now and then, and ply them well with the convincing arguments of beef and mutton, and strong ale, and that is the surest way to secure your interest in their hearts."

"I'm inclined to agree with you," replied Melmont, "that with a pack of wretches such as these, the true *argumentum ad* HOMINEM, is the *argumentum ad* VENTREM—seeing that the stomach is the god to which most men pay adoration."

"Ay, and the true argument with most men,

I fancy, who are all wretched enough in their inability to withstand the argument of a good dinner. How seriously the sage Johnson thought of eating! Did he more dignify the subject of a dinner by his respect for it; or degrade himself by thinking so much about it? Verily, with frail man the reverse of the scripture text is applicable, which talks of the increase of flesh offerings not being so acceptable as a loftier kind of worship!"

"When I talk of the 'hearts' of my constituents, of course I indulge in a little electioneering cant; and, between ourselves, my great reason for hoping I shall vanquish my opponent, on a future contest, is because he is inclined to be sparing of his 'cakes and ale;' my spirit, on the other hand, being of the liberal kind in the promotion of good cheer, is a great ticket to popularity."

"Don't let this laudable spirit flag, for it is all that will give you superiority, be assured, above the local interest of Lord ——."

"What! think you the spirited electors of —— have not shared in the noble regeneration of the times?" asked Melmont, laughing; "that they are not adorers of purity of election, unbought votes, and all that I have so vapoured about on the hustings?" and he continued ironically—"Don't suppose human nature is what it was!—Don't imagine men have those itching palms for the touch of gold that they used to have—to say nothing about the vast improvement in the circumstances of the country! such a diminution of distress, or the necessity which would lead them to accept a bribe!—Pshaw! we are getting towards political and social perfection speedily!"

"It is well said," answered Sir Jasper; "I

can't help laughing to hear so many say seriously what you say ironically;—to suppose, that whilst human nature is corrupt, political projects can ever be without the chance of taint!"

"Those who utter this cant, know well enough what they are about! Meantime I fear, unless I can remedy the deficiencies in my exchequer, I shall be likely to lose the seat next election, which otherwise I am certain of, after all that I have already spent!"

"Supply your exchequer!—'what a pity,' says a wit in the play, 'we individuals can't issue Exchequer Bills, and lay taxes on the fools and dupes of society, gravely pretending, like government, to pay them interest while we modestly pocket the principal?'"

"My way of remedy must be by laying a tax on the scheme of matrimony. A rich wife, Sir Jasper,—a rich wife is what I must look out for, or farewell ambition! whose projects cost so much."

"You're right in your anxiety to get into the 'House,' though it is sometimes one way of sinking a fortune."

"Ay, and of making one at others!"

"True—at least it used to be true: whichever way it may be, your family-character requires you should 'get in;' a man is, in fact, nobody, unless he is in parliament."

"Nobody! a mere cipher, an atomy, a non-entity! The being 'in' makes a person of consequence out of nobody, and sinks into comparative insignificance any distinction of family. Judge, then, my anxiety to compass this object, by a 'prudent connexion,' as I call it, — a due admiration of that estimable and super-eminent quality of 'female attraction,' a long purse."

"No doubt here, in Cheltenham, at a place of resort, as this is, you will answer your object; —nay, somebody hinted to me the other day, something about a certain fair widow-lady,

who, among other attractions, seemed eminently endowed with that which you are obliged to pay peculiar deference to. I remember it was a certain Restamy,—'Bob Restamy' as they call him, or as he calls himself."

"The impudent knave! how should he know anything of my projects?" replied Melmont, laughing; "or if he did, the fellow deserves to have his head broken for prating!"

"Who is this lady, may I ask?" asked Sir Jasper.

"A very sensible and agreeable person," replied Melmont, smiling,—"a great deal of mind!"

"A great deal of mind! If you had said a great deal of money I should have understood you! Mind, forsooth! I thought you had a 'mind' for the exchequer of this fair widow, having yourself stock enough of mind, *per se*.

You are become quite moral! Mind, indeed!" said Sir Jasper, laughing.

"One is obliged to spice one's sentiments, now and then, Sir Jasper, with a smack of morality, if it were merely for the sake of—keeping up appearances," answered Melmont, in the same jocund vein.

Alice, who had overheard the whole of this dialogue, was not so inclined to feel amused at its purport, as those between whom it passed; for perhaps they spoke as much in joke as in earnest. Melmont had said this purposely to disguise his real feelings from Sir Jasper; but as she was aware that what fortune she might expect, could never be adequate to answer such expectations as he seemed to entertain in any alliance he might make, for the mere sake of promoting objects of a costly ambition,—and, as, at the same time she knew (notwith-

standing his avowal to her) that men often avow one thing, with the express purpose of disguising another, — she felt a momentary uneasiness, which, however, a look from her lover, who perceived what was passing in her mind, speedily banished. She and Lady Lentworth now entered more into the conversation, which became general. After this Melmont indulged Sir Jasper in taking a hand at a rubber of whist with him, "two-handed"—"short points," while Alice played,—much for the benefit of Sir Jasper, who was a winner in consequence of the involuntary inattention to the game, on the part of his antagonist, who forgot himself and what he was about, whilst listening to her performance. His admiration of her was not diminished by hearing her play and sing delightfully, as she did for the greater part of the evening. And now our hero took his leave, more in love

than ever. On his way home, as it was not yet very late, it occurred to him to call at Restamy's, and call that varlet to account for his impertinent prating about himself and his affairs. To his surprise he found the place deserted, the "Figaro" that had tenanted it decamped—no one knew why or wherefore, or where.

"Lucky for the knave," said Melmont, "at this moment that he is out of my way; my fingers itch to belabour him. I would teach him to pretend to secresy, and prate all the time to every one that comes in his way about matters where the knave's assistance is sometimes asked. I suppose it is for some characteristic default of this kind that he has absconded, dreading the just reward of a good drubbing. We shall hear in time, I suppose, and I am curious to learn."

So saying, Melmont went home and retired to bed, but not to rest; for what with the state of

uncertainty and doubt in which he was, his thoughts seldom could be very tranquil. However, he was of an ardent temperament, and more inclined to defy trouble than give way to it; he had therefore disguised his care, laughed amongst the gayest, while all unpleasant thoughts fled before the vision of Alice. Then the widow and her money, and a seat in parliament, and the electors of ———, came before him, in succession; then La Marre—villany and ruin! Then Alice would smile again;—and amidst these phantoms, fair and foul, he at last fell asleep.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FAIR PRISONER.

Distrust and heaviness sit round my heart.
OTWAY'S ORPHAN.

WE must now take our readers back to the strange old haunted house which had been the scene of our hero's interview with La Marre. It was in a room close by the landing-place of that narrow staircase at the back of the house by which he had made his retreat, that a lady was sitting looking at a miniature picture, as she

held it over a small silver lamp: she was examining it with a close and earnest scrutiny. Her countenance was of noble expression, and there was a sweetness that tempered the pride it displayed—a sweetness rendered yet more interesting by the air of sorrow that pervaded her features and demeanour. She would have been in the "bloom" of youth, had not care rendered her cheek pale, and thrown a damp upon the liveliness so natural to her time of life. She was evidently unhappy.

"And these are the features of my mother," she said; "her name however is yet a secret to me, and these initials on the back of the miniature tell me little but that I am, for some reason or another, kept a stranger to the circumstances of my birth; they do not agree with the name I bear. But this is a theme of uncertainty less grievous than the outrages which I am in con-

stant dread of being exposed to under this detested roof. Yet how to escape the vigilance of the Count I know not,—or what is the reason of his persecuting me I cannot imagine . . ."

Here she was interrupted by a tap at the door, and on bidding the person enter, she was told by an elderly crabbed-looking female that the Count desired to speak with her in the *salon*, to which the reader has already been introduced.

It was now somewhat late in the evening; the room was handsomely lighted up. The Count was there, dressed in a dinner evening dress; his manner seemed gay, and he tried to appear lively and agreeable.

"Well, haughty fair-one," said he, "how like you your accommodation in Hatton-house?" —(such was the name of the dwelling, as may be judged from what was said in Chap-

ter II. concerning Dame Hatton)—"have you been duly attended to?—have you been comfortable? I never saw you looking so well or so lovely;" and he here endeavoured to take her hand, but Elvira (such was her name) withdrew it.

"I have not wanted necessary attendance," she replied; "but as for any feelings of comfort, how can I entertain them, leading, as I do, such a life of perpetual annoy, from proposals on your part, calculated only to shock me? to say nothing of the very suspicious character of this dwelling."

"Suspicious character!" The count laughed, and asked her what had given her cause so to characterise it.

"Am I not nightly disturbed by noises,—by bacchanals of the most ferocious and riotous description, which I overhear, as they reach the melancholy loneliness of my prison (for so

I may truly call it)? and yet never do I see any one, scarcely, but yourself, and then only to be tormented with proposals that disgust and shock me."

"It is your own fault that you live in what you call a prison. Have I not over and over avowed my love for you—my respect? Have I not reared you? Am I not now shielding you from destitution? And all I ask in return is your love, if not your gratitude."

"My degradation, you mean, as a sacrifice to your guilty passions. Is this the object for which you have, as you say, reared me and at present are harbouring me? Blame me, if you please, for ingratitude, and never more let me be under the obligation of such countenance and care; suffer me to quit this roof, for, on the terms you would wish to see me dwell under it, its atmosphere is pollution."

Nay, nay, Elvira, subdue this lofty tone.

I am not disposed to be offended at what you say, I love you too well. Have I not deserved your love in return?"

"Love is not the subject of choice or premeditation; it is influenced by feelings with which I confess you have never inspired me. Besides, on this subject, if you have any honour, you will forbear to urge me, for my affections are already engaged."

"How? when? already engaged?" asked La Marre, with confusion, his assumed gaiety shadowed by a frown which disclosed his natural severity of disposition.

"It signifies not how or when. But suppose it were not so, still I could never return your love, as you call it upon any terms; but upon those which, since I have been in this house, you have more than once dared to offer it, the mention of it only awakens my indignation."

"Retract that word, which if you do, and change this tone of contradiction, you shall quit this place instantly."

"For what? For insults as foul anywhere else as here?"

"I will not parley with you longer; but only repeat my admonitions, not to mar your own interests by this obstinate opposition. Why will you force me to speak harshly, when I had never thought of speaking but in terms of affection,—of love? Beware!"

"Beware!" repeated the voice, to which La Marre paid no attention openly, though secretly it annoyed him much.

"Your language is altogether unworthy a gentleman," said Elvira. "You degrade yourself and me,—so now I leave you. If I am destitute, and you have a spark of generosity, you will be the more readily inclined not

to find strength in the helplessness of my situation."

So saying she quitted the room, while he answered her only with a kind of sneering laugh, while at the same time his mind was occupied in considering whence came the interruption occasioned by the voice he had overheard. He knew not that he had an enemy under his own roof, or, if he had, that enemy was scarcely one of whom he had much reason to stand in awe. With these considerations he took a lamp and searched behind the tapestry—some old tapestry with which one side of the room was covered —but he found no signs of any one having been there, nor did he know of any private door that could have given any one access to this part of the room. Desisting from a fruitless search, and setting down the lamp, he dressed himself in a military frock, and putting

on his hat and cloak, locked the door after him, and proceeded down the narrow staircase at the back of the house to a sort of cave,—a spot where we must take the reader to learn what has been going on there during La Marre's interview with Elvira.

CHAPTER XV.

THE "TRYSTING"-PLACE OF THE GANG.

What name was that he uttered? I *once* knew it!
BARKER'S CHRISTIAN TURNED TURK—1609.

WHAT the reader has long ago suspected was the fact—that the haunted dwelling of Dame Hatton was now the rendezvous and lurking-place of a set of as daring thieves and swindlers as any the world has known of late years. Very likely the notorious swindler Coster, and one or two other "fashionables" of this description,

might have been of the gang while it existed. We shall now introduce the reader to the spot whence the sound of those orgies of ruffianism had reached his ears and those of our hero, on a former occasion. This spot appeared originally to have formed the kitchen and cellars of the old house. The former was still used for its old purposes at the end where the fire-place was, while, at the other end, which was very spacious, ample room was afforded round a huge stove for the banquets of those who tenanted this spot. The cellars formed the receptacle of quantities of goods of all descriptions—stuffs, plate, jewellery;—concerning the distribution of these there were endless altercations, which, however, were always referred to the arbitration of the leader of these scoundrels, who was the person calling himself the "Count La Marre." The confusion of the scene was

at present beyond all description. In one corner, older and more experienced thieves were giving some little urchins lessons in "picking pockets," tutoring them how to make lying excuses in case of their being obliged to resort to them under any unlucky charge. The "wire harlequin" was being duly practised on, and the urchin who could take a handkerchief or any article that might be appended to one of the hooks on the pendent wires (ready to tremble, as they were,) without making the machine move, was to have the reward of his lightness of finger. Other urchins were reciting the "slang catechism," together with little wretches of the weaker sex, partners with them in petty pilfering, and the commencement of vice of other descriptions. In another quarter a group of older queans were clamouring with their "pals" (as the slang word is) for a share of the earnings of thievery, in return for

those blandishments which the "Assyrian"* Venus (to use the classical expression) distributed. The ears of any decent person would have been too much shocked to have listened to the mixture of oaths, impropriety, and slang which were perpetually heard in these sinks of humanity. In another quarter a set of merry gamblers of a better exterior, forming part of what is called the "swell-mob," were throwing dice or playing at *rouge et noir*, mingling their game with copious draughts from the bottle, oaths, and all the characteristic impieties of flash-blackguardism. Two or three older ruffians and more desperate looking characters sat together apart, at a small round table. The first was dressed like a courier, in a blue jacket and trousers, with a fur cap on his head. The other was Melmont's *Cicerone*, Geoffry—he of the drab great-coat

* See Herodotus.

and red neck-wrapper. Another, too, a more thoughtful-looking person, and who did not seem to enter much into the rough hilarity of his two companions, was with them. He was dressed in a "shabby-genteel" (as it is called) brown frock—his countenance pale, and his hat in his hand, which he occasionally swung backwards and forwards as if meditating something, and apparently something which discomfited him.

"Come, Starling," said the man in the fur cap, "you seem a peg too low this evening. A glass of this good Glenlivet will make your blood circulate and your good humour find itself again. Come, a glass neat! No hot water, no sugar—neat, I say!"

This rough attempt towards cheering him had little effect upon Starling, who said he had taken enough, but that no doubt Geoffry would

drink as many glasses as he pleased—"neat," and make up for his deficiency.

"Ay, that I will. Come, here's one to the health of our good captain, or what you please to call him, Falder!"

"Falder!" repeated after him, in a tone of surprise, an old woman who was sitting near, apparently busied in darning a tattered habiliment, as if not minding anything about her.

"Hush, Geff!" said the man in the fur cap; "I thought I heard yonder old crone repeat that name after you—should mind what you're about. No more of the mountain dew for you; or, if you will drink his health, speak aloud, and drown the recollection of the first name in that of the last—come, here's a health to Count La Marre!"

"A health to Count La Marre!" said Geoffry—"a better fellow never breathed."

"The Count La Marre," said the old woman, in a low voice, to herself; "are Falder and he the same?"

She was not heard by the men, who challenged Starling to drink the health; but he sate sullen, and saying he had reasons which both La Marre and themselves should one day know, for not doing so, he got up from the table abruptly, and left the cave or cellar (or whatever the reader may please to call it) by a flight of narrow stone steps, that communicated with the house, leaving his two companions in amazement at his discomposure.—"A strange fellow that Starling! there's no knowing how to take him—he's not a subject to stick by any one!"

"No! nor for any one to stick to," replied Geoffry; "there's some mischief in his sulkiness—you mind if there's not."

Their parley was here broken off by the entrance of some stragglers of the gang, with two or three degraded females, who all clamoured for drink, food, and a share of the plunder or pickings, as they termed it. But the rule was, that all the booty accumulated should be put into the common stock, and distributed late at night, or early the next day, by the "Count" himself, whose LIEUTENANTS, in particular, were the two men who have just been speaking. It was their business to receive the booty and examine it, and the merits of those who were most active in its procuration, when, to crown the interest of the proceedings, at a set time the Count made his appearance, taking his share as a premium for the protection he afforded the gang, according to the report of his lieutenants as to the amount of plunder, distributing portions of booty to the thieves and

swindlers in due order. Whether Starling had considered himself treated, on any occasion, with want of fairness, by the swindler in chief, or whether any thing else was the cause of his secession from the gang, remains to be seen. The period of final distribution was generally that of a supper, or late carousal, and the time was now approaching for it. At length the tables were spread—all was bustle and expectation for the coming of the Count.

The following are some of the elegant remarks of the females.

"He's a charming fellow," said one of them.

"*Un vrai diable*," said another, a French damsel; "*un diable à quatre* *."

"That's true enough," said the old woman above mentioned, with a certain significance in her look, that bespoke she knew more of the

* See "Vive Henri quatre," the song.

Count's character than the female who had applied the above appellation to him. All was noise, singing, swearing, laughing, shouting,—meat was frying, corks were drawing, and cans clattering;—amidst this tumult entered the desired chief by the stone steps which Starling had ascended. This was the signal for "business!" The lieutenants were summoned.

"What is the reason that Starling is absent?" asked La Marre, angrily.

"We don't know, your honour; but he's strangely sulky this evening."

"Well, we must do without him; but let him take care and not trifle with me," said La Marre, and continued the distribution: after which they all sat down to the concluding orgies of the night, the young urchin pick-pockets and little girls acting as waiters and cup-bearers for their betters or elders, after

whose surfeit they were to regale on whatever was left. The business of feeding kept the company tolerably silent for some little time; but tempered as most of them were, by no inconsiderable potations taken during the day, the additional liquor they now swallowed soon had its effect, and the tumult of ruffian revelry quickly made its way, and filled the gloomy vaults of the roof with its discordant echoes.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MONTPELLIER WALK—CHARACTERS.

See the people pass by, in the gardens awhile.
BATH GUIDE.

How, interrupted?—OVERREACH.

IT is no wonder that Melmont should be under a considerable degree of anxiety as to the machinations of La Marre. This man had been the confidential friend of his father, who so implicitly relied upon him, that it was not at

all impossible the story of the will might be true; he was now just coming of age, and about to succeed, as he had once hoped, to his father's property, by right of heirdom, having always understood that his parent died without having made any will, until he was informed by La Marre of there being one. His confidence, however, did not altogether fail him, feeling there were so many suspicious circumstances connected with La Marre's mode of living. Meantime, the man was admitted amongst the first circles; was a member of Crockford's—bore the character of an accomplished man of the world, though to Melmont there appeared so much of the cunning of villany, disguised under the mask of an attempted liberal bearing and courtesy of manners, that he always regarded him with a glance, that said, "I look through you, and see

what you are!" Probably it was this that, secretly mortifying La Marre, rendered him more determined to endeavour to abase and ruin our hero. Wherever there is any cause for uncertainty or suspense, it is impossible entirely to stifle it; Melmont's gaiety in society therefore was but acting a part. He was at present on the Promenade, walking with Sir Jasper and Lady Lentworth, and another person, on whose arm Lady L. leant,—Melmont had the happiness of conducting his "dear Alice." They sat down on one of the benches near the entrance to the pump-room, at the top of the favourite walk, while the band was playing as usual. Melmont amused Alice with his remarks on those that passed by, and told her their history.

"There," he said, "you see that stiff elderly gentleman, who seems well pleased with himself

for what he is saying; he is what is called a *ci-devant jeune homme*, a man who, though a *septuagénaire*, has married a young wife and turned his back on his grown-up children by the first—one of the vainest of the vain and most selfish of the selfish! who from having gained a little paltry "lieutenant-governorship" abroad, years ago, was so much elated by it, that he could never tread upon his heels again, but jerked along on tip-toe! You see, even at his present time of life, he walks with a half spring, half hobble."

"What was the distinction you mentioned?" asked Alice.

"Oh, some trumpery little governorship, that had a knighthood attached to it, in one of our colonies, where there was little competition, and he had the "march" to it all his own way, since nobody envied him the distinction! So selfish

is this man, and so unnatural, that they say he has been the cause of driving a son of his to ruin, having taken a dislike to him from a child! He was ever a tyrant in his family, and meanly cringing to his superiors in rank."

"Very contemptible, indeed! I have heard enough of him. What is his name? Sir —— what?"

"Lewis Masterton."

"Oh, there is Mrs. L ——; how do you like her?"

"Tolerably looking, though somewhat *passée* now; a cleverish person, but too fond of finding fault, and not very particular as to inventing subjects of detraction against really deserving persons, should they have ever happened to disagree with her—or any one she knows and agrees with—in the slightest degree."

"There is nothing so mean as detraction.—What sort of a person is her husband?"

"He is an old coxcomb too, of a different sort from Sir Lewis—he is a vapid, prating, shallow being, but, coming into some property, he got into the commission of the peace, and has now acquired a smattering of county business, from studying the poor-laws; so in these rural law particulars he is possibly grounded enough to secure him from the general charge of shallowness, which he certainly evinces on every other subject."

"Very likely then he is not sensible of his own shallowness?"

"There is the thing! not a happier being could there be, than this man! he is in that state of blissful self-satisfaction, that is perfectly happy in not seeing its own insignificance."

"Who would wish then to remove so happy a delusion?"

"I agree with you it would be cruel, and not worth while. There is a strange character!"

"Who is he? He has an odd expression of countenance!"

"They say, and apparently not without reason, that he is half cracked: he dotes on his wife one moment, takes fits of raving at her the next,—and then, dotes on her again!"

"Save me from such a maniac; I could dispense with his doting, if it must be at the expense of my peace, just as it happened to suit his caprice."

"Look! there is another strange character! a very social Machiavel! He has always attained every thing he ever got by appearing to avoid it; he is a man of genius, is perpetually abusing himself, and though some ill-natured

people are willing to take him at his word, yet, in the long run, his proofs of genius have been so incontestible, that he has many advocates, who are amused at his eccentricities, and willing to praise him; he is a perfect contradiction in all he does—look there! he is bowing most respectfully to those very vulgar dowdy-looking people."

"Why so?"

"Why for the very reason, that they are vulgar and dowdy."

"I see the reason!—because by his show of attention to them, he makes those around imagine them to be persons of consequence, and hence, that he need not be ashamed of being seen speaking to them;—a good manœuvre!"

"Precisely so; but he is rather a dangerous person too, for he is very civil to those he

most hates. Oh, there are my friends the Cymons!"

"They seem nice people."

"Why yes, the husband is a very good-hearted person, I believe; certainly, apparently, very good-natured; he has reason indeed to be so, for never was a more fortunate being in the world!"

"Why, what? a prize in the lottery?"

"Yes, in Fortune's lottery. He was the son of a clergyman, and being found impenetrably dull, was packed off to sea; when lo! by the death of some old, out-of-the-way relative, he was called home to wealth and an estate, and married a person admirably well calculated to make him happy."

"How so? her qualities must be very amiable doubtless?"

"Why I was not now considering that so

much, as that she was exactly suited to him; not at all above him in capacity (which, when this is the case, rarely occasions much regard in a man for his wife); she is, in fact, a silly woman; of a family of cockneys, which her manner and expressions indicate, and mightily fond of considering herself a *grande dame*, as being mistress of a place called Boobymarsh Hall. Under these fits of self-satisfaction, she is fond of attempting to say fine things, and of coquetting with any one who is near her; meantime, her poor addle-brain lord is jealous as the green-eyed monster can make him!"

"Indeed!" said Alice, laughing; "and what is the consequence?"

"That the lady, instead of scolding him for his absurdity, says something affronting to the person she has been coquetting with, in order to appease her husband."

"Booby indeed!" rejoined Alice.

"Yes," said Melmont laughing, "he's a booby, and she's a baby: so much for the Cymons! They, however, show great respect for me,—since Mrs. Cymon, being fond of match-making,—(which, by-the-by, is another of her amiable prettinesses,)—sanguinely hopes to captivate me with one from a host of interesting and poor relatives, of whom she very kindly endeavours to promote the interests."

"Well, that is very kind!"

"I mean to give her that credit, be assured, in this particular, as far as they are concerned; but meantime it is an annoyance to the 'Gentle Shepherds' with whom she is endeavouring to parcel out her 'lambkins,' by 'hook and by crook,' for she really does her utmost in this matter, and I believe has succeeded on one or two occasions."

"Fortunate for those she has intrigued for! But see, papa and mamma are going into the pump-room; shall we follow them?"

"We'll follow them in, after we have taken one more turn," said Melmont; and rising from the seat, he offered his arm to Alice, who, proceeding with him, by a path that turned from the end of the great walk, into the gardens which the pump room flanks, they did not perceive that a person was following them close behind.

Melmont, after a short pause, began to revert to the subject that interested them both more than any other, and our hero was going on to say that he hoped there would be, now, little delay to the completion of their happiness, since he should shortly be of age, and trusted he should succeed to his father's estate by right of inheritance; "and without you," he continued, to Alice, "neither estate nor——"

"What estate?" demanded a voice, at which Melmont started—and looking round beheld La Marre.

"Scoundrel!" cried Melmont, "what means this unseemly intrusion here? Keep your insolence for another place, and another time, and do not haunt my privacy—I tell you I defy you."

Alice, as it may be supposed, was confounded at this interruption, and could not suppress an involuntary shriek when La Marre so suddenly showed himself. She was astonished both at his having proved he had overheard what Melmont had addressed to her, and at the purport of what he had said, which showed that he had a controul over her lover, or that the latter was offering her what he was not entitled to do. All this embarrassment was, however, cut short by the arrival of Sir Jasper and lady L., while La Marre, seeing the mischief he had produced,

retreated, telling Melmont where he was to be found. Our hero's mind, meantime, was agitated with the double anxiety of finding out the extent of the mischief this man had done him, and also the explanation he should be obliged to give Alice: for the present he assumed his composure with his usual tact, telling her, that what had happened was but a trifle—of no consequence; or that if it should turn out to be true—what she had overheard as to the doubt of his having any estate, she should be further informed of. He then pressed her hand, and took his leave of the party, having seen them to the door of their residence.

To return, however, to the walk we have just quitted. La Marre, as he went away, was himself not a little disconcerted to see a person approach him with a determined aspect which boded an altercation: this person was Starling,

—the man who, we may remember, was represented as disaffected towards La Marre.

"What is it you want with me at this place?" said La Marre to the man. "I insist on your not following me here with your importunities." He tried to brush by, but Starling stuck close to him.

"I have been your slave too long, and but too ill-rewarded—too paltry are the inducements held out to me to be any longer the hanger-on of a swindler, who has swindled no one more than myself."

"Let me not hear another word on this subject—you are ungrateful."

"I will expose you to the whole town! You (and some of your compeers in gaming and roguery) flutter here and there at different watering-places, picking up dupes. I will mar your scheming."

"No more of this, I say!" (La Marre's anger would readily have given way to greater violence of expression here, but he checked himself, apprehensive the man might probably create a disturbance.) "You have no cause," he added, in a more subdued tone, "for this insult."

"Was I not the agent you employed in bringing the lady (Elvira, he meant) from France to your den—Hatton House? Did you not promise, for those services, to establish me in independence? What have you done? Have you fulfilled a particle of your promise?"

"You have no patience.——"

"Patience!" said Starling, stamping his foot; "I think my patience has had time to wear out! Where is the reward you promised me, long before this last affair, for being a party to the signature of the will——"

"Pshaw, pshaw! Do not doubt that I will remember your services; only be reasonable——"

"Reasonable! Yes, you want, by this will, to claim all that property, which you know will place you beyond the reach of practising any of the arts you at present practise, and then you will mock me! But take heed—I may thwart you yet;—and so now I leave you."

The Count, somewhat repenting of not having temporised more with this irritated man, would have called him back; but he was gone, and seemingly with a determination of purpose that was not over-auspicious; however, the "Count" was safe, as he considered he was in possession of all his objects,—as will be better seen by-and-by,—so, drowning all thoughts of apprehension, with his usual effrontery, he joined the throng on the Promenade; and, being well known to many in society, he was soon busied in conversation—with some on social terms—with others, with an eye towards making them his dupes, and especially

those whom he saw flattered by his notice as a person of rank,—for such is the weakness of men, and the English not least,—and amongst the most observant towards him may be mentioned Sir Lewis Masterton. With these good people we leave our exemplary "Count," and wish them joy of their company.

CHAPTER XVII.

"OUT OF SORTS"—A SOLILOQUY.

Nunquam minus solus quam cum solus, nec minus otiosus quam cum otiosus.

CICERO.

WHEN Melmont got home, he found a note, inviting him that evening to a ball, where he was to meet the Lentworths; but, in consequence of what had happened in the walk that morning, he feared Alice would be too much discomposed to go. However our hero's

maxim was "*la gaieté porte toujours de bonheur*," and he was determined neither to be downcast himself about the matter, nor permit her to be so; so, with this view, he wrote a note, telling her he should go, and begged of her not to decline going also. This note he despatched by Fleuret, his *valet de chambre* (as has been already told in Chapter I. of these pages), a handy fellow enough—a kind of Scapin, who was of use to his master on emergencies, for which he made up by indulging, at times, in a certain privilege allowed him of expressing his thoughts.

"Order an ice to be sent as you pass by the shop, in your way with the note."

"Yes, Sir, I'll order Fanchette to bring it up," answered the impudent valet—"immediately."

"And let me have a bottle of champagne," added Melmont, as the valet made his exit; "this may do me good, for in sooth, I am in

a yawning mood, despite my efforts to persuade Alice and myself to be sprightly!"

In fact, do what he would, our hero could not altogether stifle the considerations of annoyance which the probable success of La Marre's machinations suggested. Banish the thought, or defy it as he would, there lay a weight on his spirits since the interview, or interruption rather, of La Marre, which he could not altogether shake off, so that he was to-day in one of those moods denominated "megrims," an affection of mind which, for the most part, "put men out" with every thing about them, and themselves too. In such a mood as this you may see an ordinarily good-natured fellow turned into a growling, discontented acetic, whom it is the inclination of every one to shun, who would, on his own part, as gladly fly from himself!

Melmont, like other beings under this influ-

ence, was in a soliloquising, discontented humour rather, though by no means a naturally splenetic person, but much *au contraire*, as the subject of his musings will show. Two or three magazines were lying on the table, and a newspaper, which he took in for the purpose of sending every day to the independent electors of ——, where it was his ambition, one of these days, to figure as representative. Meantime he walked up and down the room *en déshabille*, and thus gave vent to the effusions of the mood "lack-a-daisical," "blue-devil haunted," and "vapourish"—a potential mood, indeed, for provoking the flow of solitary grumbling.

"What mere acting the game of society is! What a cameleon I am!—so grave by myself—so gay in society—so changeable ever! Lord! who would think I were the same person?—sulking and melancholising here by myself, and

running on like a very 'will-o'-the-wisp,' as I do, in society, dazzling the dull gapers about me! Pshaw, pshaw!—no conceit—I am nobody at present. Political prospects down at zero — matrimonial projects wavering in the balance——Pooh!—I may be somebody yet, in substance, that is, as well as reputation: at present, I have flatterers and puffers enough; yet all this is but nausea to me, when I consider how hollow my real interests are. Never mind! I must keep up the game of playing a lively part, and, by appearing more than I am, shall gain, perhaps, what I consider my talents, name, station in society, *et cetera*, entitle me to.——Very convenient, certainly, the marriage with the widow (Mrs. Angus) would have been;—but there's an end of her.—And, after all, what is ambition but a farce, that may perhaps turn out too serious to permit one to smile? What is it

worth to the possession of Alice?—Let me see —there are two hundred and fifty majority in the borough on my side of politics.—Oh dear! it is in vain hoping——"

Our *réveur* yawned—took a hasty turn up and down the room—stopped suddenly—seized a newspaper—cast his eye over it—and indulged in thoughts that were, now, led on the track of his public speculations.

"The moment I were in a situation to 'bleed' more freely, as it is called—which means to say, when I can fling away a cool thousand or two, without any particular inconvenience, it should go for a seat in the House. Of course, I mean in fair canvassing. Doubtless, in these reform times of unsullied purity, what is spent," he continued, ironically, "is not spent, as it was formerly, in promoting corruption—no, not at all!—Yes, the game shall be played

over again, with better success. The hustings shall be my *rouge et noir* table—'the seat' my stake. St. Stephen, I am a votary at thy shrine, and could see thee stoned over again for not already propitiating my prayers. They may call me presumptuous, if they please, in opposing that leaden-headed Lord ——, because of his great local interest; but I care not—I am determined to make the struggle again. I care little for the comments of the world; if one did, one might never have any plan of action at all, but be bandied about from this side to that, at the caprice of every fool one wished 'to be well with,' as it is called: the result would be, that one would please nobody, any more than oneself, which is the worst of the affair—being in the predicament of the old man and his ass in the fable. No, no! I thank Heaven! I have fortitude, character, and pride enough to follow

my own line of conduct—to care neither about the jests of my friends nor the lies of my enemies—which last, by-the-by, chiefly consist of those who call themselves friends. 'Friends!' I laugh at the term! So we sinners call ourselves Christians, by the same rule. There is as little Christianity in the one, as there is friendship in the other. Let them censure and carp, or abuse as they will—this is the game of society—the main-spring on which the machine turns; it is made up of, and lives by mutual scandal, slander, and censure. I can give it, however, 'as good as it brings,' as the saying is; and as I can't alter it, let it e'en go its own way—I heed it not. The abuse or censure of the world passes by me unheeded 'as the idle wind, which I respect not.'—It is a pity some poor, weak politician did not overhear my soliloquising: this would be a good lesson to him

Nay, more: I like—positively like, having persons who will find fault with me, and oppose me. It is opposition that excites a man—calls forth his latent energies, and kindles into flame what genius he has;—it strikes out the sparks the more bright and vivid as the impulse is stronger.—Opposition! opposition! I embrace thee ever! There can be no display of genius without thy impulse. The stream flows smoothly along until it is ruffled by the wind; then the waves curl, their tops are crested with foam, and the pinnace of genius is borne along with her triumphant colours—wafted on her course, whose object is the aggrandisement of social interests, good to mankind, glory to the world!—while those that stand by, looking on her progress, gaze on her as she floats past—their eyes suffused with tears of delight—of admiration—silent with awe—trembling with expectation!"

Our hero stopped short in this harangue to himself, and, smiling, continued in a different tone.

"Hang it! here is a piece of oratory that would have done for the electors of ——; it is all lost in solitude—its sweetness wasted! However, they shall have the benefit of it all in good time. — I'll now ring the bell for Fleuret. I was getting into King Cambyses' vein, and fitter for soda-water than champagne. I seldom require exciting, I fancy; yet I don't wish to be lowered. I like to keep above par—— Heavens! what would even the dull people, whom I make stare and grin so 'at my good things' — what would they say, to see me, Arthur Melmont—the lively, the mercurial,—the conceited, too, I fear, I must add here,—downcast? What a part one plays in society—a mere part! Good gracious! I am really neither

very lively, nor conceited in my disposition; yet I prate on till I appear, and am, both. Before others, I keep alive the game of entertainment—by myself, flattering myself on my success.—Pooh! I am not very conceited. In accusing myself of conceit, I show I know myself, and am too wise to be conceited. — Shall I see Alice to-night, I wonder? I am sure she will let my note persuade her. Dear Alice! do I not worship the thought of her? What poetry in her countenance! what soul in every feature! A voice of harmony seems to speak to one from her very look—

> The mind, the music breathing from her face,

says Byron. She is a living poem!—an embodied sentiment!—an animated picture!—an impersonation of bright ideas! In fact—I love her."

Melmont walked hastily about the room, then muttered something more about his public views of ambition, coupled with his contempt for the beings who were to return him to Parliament; but his further reveries were cut short by a tap at the door. "Come in," said our hero, when a charming little creature entered,—a *brunette*, with that feature of contrast that is often seen in dark women — of light blue eyes and raven-black hair. On her head she wore a coloured silk handkerchief, *à la Française*. She was, in fact, an envoy from the confectioner's, and an envoy whose embassies were always received with due attention from persons in the single situation of our hero. This is not said in any disparagement to the respectability of little Fanchette, for such was the name of this interesting and "prudently-conducted young person," who now

appeared with the ice which Fleuret had ordered to be brought. As she entered, our hero forgot his *megrims*, and greeted her (for she was a favourite, as has been said, throughout Cheltenham, for her modesty, as well as beauty)—

"Ah, Fanchette! you are come at last with the ice. You look prettier than ever, my little genius of *bonbons*—my little sweetmeat personified! That ice was to have cooled the fever that scorched me; but those bright eyes, I think, will mar all the benefit of the ice, and make the fever worse. What say you?"

Fanchette blushed and smiled most becomingly; and we really do not know whether our hero might not have been imprudent enough to have stolen a kiss, and she, perhaps, to have conceded one, had not another rap at the door been now heard; and, on the customary per-

mission to enter, in came Fleuret with some sponge-cakes and champagne. Meantime, Fanchette withdrew—not without being somewhat keenly eyed, with a look of characteristic, saucy significance, by the varlet lacquey.

"Well, Fleuret, you have delivered the note," said Melmont.

"Sir, I am so sorry——"

"What! you have not delivered it?"

"I have brought back——"

"What, brought it back without having delivered it! I am exceedingly annoyed—very much displeased—how dare you trifle, Sir, in this way with my orders and my interests——"

Fleuret, seeing his master not inclined to indulge him at present in his privilege of playing the fool, or, (in reality,) the impertinent, put off the character of licence he was generally allowed to bear, and stopped short his

master's anger, by the best mode of appeasing it in the world—giving him an answer to his note!

"There, there, Sir," said the valet, pretending to assume the tone of an injured person, rather than one in the wrong, "if you had condescended to allow your poor servant to end what he was going on to say, you would have seen what he had brought back!"

"Very well, Fleuret, this will do, it is fortunate for you."

Meantime our hero was greedily devouring the contents of the note. We may augur from the indication of his feelings exhibited in his countenance, as Fleuret watched it, that a favourable reply to his request had been given; and he again hoped for a happy evening, unalloyed by further megrims or apprehensions, all which the presence of Alice put to flight, as the morning

mists disperse before the effulgence of the sun. That the note, in its purport, was satisfactory, we may judge from the bearing of Fleuret who could not repress his inclination to prate, and accordingly ventured, now he saw his master divested of any thing like a frown, to congratulate him on looking so much better on a sudden. The knave always tried his ground first before he ventured to proceed.

"Ay," said Melmont, "I was a little low spirited—the champagne has done me good; but what o'clock is it?—nearly time to dress, I fancy; getting late, is it not? You had better dress my hair."

Accordingly, Fleuret, who could act in all capacities which form an accomplished valet and generally useful domestic (we shall perhaps hereafter see him in the capacity of cook), proceeded to exercise his talents as friseur for

the laudable purpose of Adonising his master's person: in which function he might have excited the jealousy of Bob Restamy himself.

"There, do not curl it much," said Melmont, as he sat down before the glass and subjected his "locks" to the operation; "merely give it a proper and decent 'set' as it is called, it hangs about my head at present in rat tails."

"Oh, yes—parted, Monsieur! it is the *mode*," (so it was, at that time,)—said Fleuret, wilfully mistaking.

"No! no! I never wear anything in the *mode* or fashion; that is, in any fashion, except such as my own taste dictates: as to wearing it parted—it may suit some faces to have it so, flat at top and bushed out at the sides; but I detest this '*mode*,' as you call it—I never wish to make myself appear worse than Nature intended me."

"*Ah bien, Monsieur!* it is very well said, and a good lesson to many a *petit maître*, that doesn't know how to dress to suit his own foolish-looking *tête-de-veau!*"

Accordingly, with this remark (we don't write it in broken English, as we ought), the careful and zealous friseur proceeded to dress his master's hair, in observance of the quiet rule prescribed to him, to study neatness and propriety of appearance, not to adopt unbecoming extravagance, however much the custom of the day might sanction it. A man of taste and sense always adopts, as his fashion, that which becomes him best; too many adopt as the *mode*, that which makes them look ridiculous. This laudable taste and propriety, our hero showed during his toilette in one or two other items of dress, which, as it may serve as a hint to greenhorns, who aim at being exquisite in

their appearance, we may just as well give: for the subject must not be considered as altogether trifling—it is no trifling matter to have a respect for one's outward man, and make it appear to the best advantage.

"They say dress is the making of a person, Fleuret," said Melmont; "how say you, *coquin?*"

"Ah, Sir, it may be in the instance of one who is 'a mere shadow,' as they say, 'of a dandy.'" (We dispense with Fleuret's lisp as a foreigner: it is so hackneyed.)

"Certainly dress is requisite to make up the character a person sustains; your flashman, mags-man, horse-chaunter, ring-random-man, hatch-way-Jack, tilbury-trim, and all the other 'fancy' characters, would be nothing without their appropriate dress."

"Ay, Sir, but then they are the blackguard set,—the polissonnerie——"

"The dealers in slang!"

"Yes, Sir! I confess though,—I like to see my master—*c'est vous, Monsieur*,—yourself, Sir, well—nay, handsomely dressed."

"What, you think a disregard for dress, Fleuret, as bad as too much study?"

"Yes, Sir, I do indeed; but what will you wear to-night? the brown coat with velvet collar or without? or the black with velvet collar and white waistcoat."

"Both these are quiet enough; either will do: but mind—all blue things, or reddish brown, with swallow tail and gilt buttons, are my abhorrence! I never wish to see them again; and, if I have any of them, you had better take them away: there is nothing so vulgar to my taste, or distaste, as the blue with the gilt buttons. Let me have what is chaste; as for the trumpery of

colours, they will do for a livery servant, or a swell butcher on a Sunday, or Mr. O'Callaghan (to whom I once gave my opinion about it*); but it is what *I* detest. How came you to order that thing for me?"

"I am very sorry, Sir; but Doltz said it was very generally worn just now."

"Dolt or Doltz—talk not of what he says is generally worn to me. Never presume upon what the 'fashion,' as it is called, may be in ordering things for me. Let false fashionables and tailor-like coxcombs do this as much as they please, but let me be a judge of what suits me best. There, you may take that dress away; and now you had better go and order a 'fly' to take me to the Rooms—it is about time."

So away went Fleuret, not sorry to have ob-

* Chap. x.

tained such an addition to his wardrobe (besides a chintz dressing-gown, also in disgrace) from the fastidiousness of his master, who was now left for a moment or two to soliloquise again aloud for want of company.

"They say of Scipio he was never less alone than when alone. I confess I like flying from thought and from self; but Scipio was pleased in his contemplations as well as busy in them—at least I can't help thinking that he was, and, in so doing, I am adding an idea to the construction of Cicero's famous character of that philosophic hero. Certainly, if one's contemplations are salutary and agreeable, to be alone is better,—is more delightful than to be amidst the din and whirl of a giddy group you perhaps care little about; but where one's contemplations are tinged with bitterness, chagrin, regret—Heavens! it is too much then to be alone; the plea-

surable feeling implied in the 'never less alone than when alone' of Cicero, does not apply here. Some minds are not framed to enjoy pleasant contemplation; or to wish to be alone—hang it!—I shall be writing a second Zimmerman on Solitude if I go on in this vein much longer. However, I am satisfied the new construction I have put on the above citation is right; and, for my part, I am glad even of such a companion in solitude as a glass of champagne—occasionally. Well, fair widow, here's a health to thee—and good luck to him that shall possess thee—and thy fortune! and, still fairer Alice, here's a health too ('a double health,' as Byron's beautiful song says,) to thee! The thought of the lovely creature revives one more than this vine-dew; albeit this too, tempers well the duller clay, and gives one double the soul after drinking it that one had before. Bravo! there's a syllogism; is it

not?—assuredly. The conclusion is, that the bright fluid has a soul in it, as I once told the worthy Mrs. Angus; for if a man had only half the soul before he drank it, he is indebted to it for the soul imbibed by drinking it. It is the source of soul to him!—but it can't be so unless it were itself a soul! I wish I had Jack Raverton *, my old college friend, here; we often used to laugh at the monkish system, the logic of the schools, in making these sophistical syllogisms, and inconclusive conclusions! Poor Jack! I wonder what has become of him; perhaps sighing for some one as fair as Alice—perhaps to possess her, while I, possibly, may not. Alice! Dear Alice! the approving smile of her beauty is a consolation to me for all the disgusts, disappointments, and *désagrémens* I am doomed to suffer. Yes! they are all dazzled, confounded,

* To him the reader shall hereafter be introduced; nay, he is the hinge of an underplot to the main one of the story.

and dispersed before a gleam of the bright eyes of Beauty. After all, talk not to me of a grave and austere philosophy; give me delusions, not truth—give me passion, not cold reflection! Why do I ask for this? because it is happiness —anything—to fly from self."

Just at this moment Fleuret entered, and informed his master that he might now fly off as soon as he pleased, the "fly" being at the door; so away went Melmont, his disturbed soliloquy, which, in a less paradoxical mood, he would have perhaps discountenanced in some of its propositions, being broken off. So our hero went to meet Alice, rather than the persons by whom he was invited. It is not worth while giving the particulars of what he said to her, or what passed; —that he met the due proportion of friends and enemies, is most probable;—that he whirled through the evening with his characteristic gaiety, and left it, to return to his own thoughts

and their restlessness, is no less probable:—He went to enjoy the round of society while whirled along on its current; to sicken at the monotony when the everlasting whirl is suspended; to long for pleasure morbidly and habitually at one moment, to find it pall a moment or two after; to grin in the faces of the friends or acquaintance one greets, and nauseate the everlasting dull recurrence of some of them when one's back is turned on the scene; to despise the weak and mean, who only esteem you as you are esteemed by others; to sift the characters and affections of people towards yourself,—and curse the misrepresentations of meddling and false friends perhaps,—though the mischief, perhaps, they do for a time, may be righted afterwards,—these, and many other such accesses of feeling, exhibit a true picture enough of Melmont's "evening" on the present occasion.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A DECISIVE STEP ON AN EMERGENCY.

ber and other rights of ownership; and that a person called a "receiver" was appointed to take the rents for the Court, pending the suit that might be entered into: consequently, what was there left for our friend Melmont to rub through the world with? His presence in town was requisite to consult with his solicitor, and, meanwhile, what La Marre had threatened him with —the loss of his estate—appeared to be wearing a serious aspect. The first thing in this emergency was to go immediately and lay matters before Sir Jasper Lentworth and his fair Alice. This he did; the old baronet praised him for his honour, but told him that as "appearances" could not be "kept up" in the present instance, the union which Melmont, (determined upon the justice of his cause, and that he should ultimately come out of his difficulties triumphant,)

still insisted on, could scarcely meet with his approbation.

The lady confessed her distress at the breaking off that, which her heart had consented to—and her affection for our hero, by the tears which stole down her lovely cheeks:—and after all, considering the future prospects of success and of vindicating his property, which he entertained, it occurred to her as rather harsh, or at any rate worldly, in her parents not to consent to her happiness and that of her admirer, when her parents' roof might be an asylum for her till the storm had blown by. In this manner her heart dictated; and thus she reasoned with herself;—using the arguments that love suggested, and which was all read by our discerning hero in her manner and countenance. He took his leave, however, with great concern;

and so much shared was it on her part, that her father was obliged to support her in his arms as Melmont left the room. When she should see him again she knew not: and at this moment Melmont himself knew as little as herself.

On quitting the Lentworths he had thoughts of going to La Marre, and expostulating with him on his proceedings, conducted as they had been, without apprising him of them; but this would be waste of time: that very night, then, he was determined to set out for town. He went back to his boarding-house, and gave orders to have his things put up; but the difficulty was how to tear himself away from Alice. He felt his affections more deeply engaged than he had been aware—he felt that happiness in existence was inseparable from the presence if not the possession of herself—he could not live without her; the thought came across him, could he but see her once more

—could he persuade her to use a little of the reasoning of love, and fly with him, he could leave her with some friend in town, for she had many, after the bonds of the Church had united them; he had little fear but that he should be able, at no very distant period, to place her in a situation worthy his wife and her own station in life. It took little time, with his ardent temperament, to determine. Towards evening he went to the back of the Lentworths' house, where there was a garden; he stood by the door, and listened if any footstep could be heard from within—he had not waited long before he heard one—he had the boldness to tap at the door. "If it should be Alice," he thought, "I can at once propose this project to her." The door was opened, not by Alice, but by her confidential maid.

"Mr. Melmont!" the girl exclaimed.

"Hush, my dear!" he said to her; "the moments are precious—take this note to your mistress for me, I implore you; and let me entreat of you, as you value her happiness and mine, to do precisely as she enjoins you, and be sure you shall be rewarded."

The girl looked surprised; nor less so than with the sovereign with which Melmont was crossing her hand at the time he finished speaking. This was a confirmatory inducement, without doubt, but Melmont was friend enough with the sex to have induced the Abigail to give him her services gratuitously in this affair. She was going to express as much, when Melmont telling her to "Begone—lose no time, and she should have his endless gratitude," he closed the door himself after her, bidding her bring him the answer as soon as possible. The result was, after a severe struggle in the

heart of Alice at the step love well enough inclined her to, but duty held her back from,—that love gained the ascendancy; the arguments of the note convinced her reason — too willing to be convinced—that in a short time all the appearances her father could desire, would be answered in the establishment she should be able to keep up: and this point having been set at rest, she thought that she might justify herself, as most young ladies do under similar circumstances, in no longer tampering with her own and her lover's happiness, but acquiesce in his proposal, which was that already mentioned as having suggested itself to our hero to make, previously to his parley with the Abigail.

At the appointed time, with such things as could be most easily carried,—a casket of jewels and some wearing apparel,—she came to the spot outside the garden door where her

lover was waiting for her; a carriage was standing ready at the end of the avenue, and it was not long before Melmont, in the very teeth of Fortune, was carrying away—perhaps to subject her to bitter mortifications—the person he loved beyond all upon earth, regardless of the sterner voice of reason, and rather priding himself on his spirit of enterprise; and, however much he or any one in his circumstances, or in any circumstances, may be censured for a step like the present, at least it was an elopement marked with the due characteristics of gallantry: there was no taking advantage of a parent's or guardian's absence—there was no inducement of money, sordid money, on either side—there was no smuggling of the bride into disobedience by agents and friends of the principal in the affair himself, as is sometimes seen to be the case—there was love, ardent and disin-

terested passion, to give the lustre, that love always gives, to its enterprises: and so, with this comment and comparison,—we leave our hero and heroine, together with the Abigail, between them, on their journey to town, as fast as four horses could advance them on their way thither.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE RUNAGATES: COLD COMFORT.

Would I were well out of the scrape.
THE SERENADE.

WHEN the fugitives got to town, the object was to get married. What! on English soil—without the consent of the parents—under age—penalties in consequence—awful! awful! How was all this to be got over?

"Oh," said our hero, in answer to a query

to the above effect from his fair companion in flight, "a perjury in the present instance comes under the class of those pure, those justifiable, pretty prevarications, called 'white lies,'—so that it would be idle to hesitate on the 'swallowing' such a 'gnat' as this! Besides, it would be absurd to recede now we have gone so far;—no, no—'necessity—expediency,' as politicians and diplomatists say, demand that the consent of every one—legally requisite (though morally very much in the way)—should be vouched for by us, without hesitation!"

Alice hung down her head, blushed, looked up, smiled, and, by her silence, gave consent; nay, more, Melmont considered it recommended him the advice of—"the sooner the better." So the licence was speedily obtained, and Alice became Mrs. Melmont in the presence of two or three confidential friends, who were, perhaps,

too, a little imposed upon by Melmont, as to his circumstances just at the present crisis. The house that he had lodged in previously to leaving town, was by no means a safe retreat for his bride; but he was spared embarrassment here by a kind female friend—the liveliest of the lively, yet sage withal—a married lady, and yet fond of little feats of spirit and romance of this kind. Lady Shelwood was the kind succouring person in the present emergency—not before, however, the whole circumstances were imparted to her in confidence; and whilst she smilingly reproved our hero and her fair charge for their want of consideration, she, at the same time, by her smile, applied a balm to the wound of her reproof,—and forgave them. Melmont, having thus safely deposited his beloved Alice, wrote a most respectful, entreating, apologising, ardent, affecting, melting, moving epistle to the worthy

Sir Jasper, and another to Lady Lentworth, while Alice added every thing that regret, that affection, self-reproof, and assurance of the prosperity of the issue in future could dictate—notwithstanding the present rashness; and these attempts at mollifying, dulcifying, and reconciling the good Lentworths, and especially preventing their running on a wild-goose chase up to town, being despatched—Melmont set forth to see about his affairs. Everything was as bad as could be. It having been reported that there was an injunction in Chancery applied for, against his touching any thing on his own estate, creditors began to be alarmed for their money; bills poured in so, that on his visiting his old lodgings (for at present he took up his abode at the generous, good-natured Lady Shelwood's, with his wife), he found the table piled with bills. He went to his solicitor's, and con-

sulted with him, and found the story of the injunction was true; and, what is more, that a suit in Chancery might be expected, unless the provisions of a certain will were admitted on the part of the claimant, the Count La Marre, against the justice of which Melmont had no positive proof to produce. What was to become of him? He was a ruined man! And his dear Alice!—He cursed his enterprise, his over-confidence, his thoughtlessness; he saw nothing before him but beggary, despair, and ruin. He thought of borrowing for present necessities, on the principle of those worthy people who keep sponging-houses,—that a little present aid will enable a man to fight through his difficulties till the storm has blown over. Accordingly he went to two or three friends, but they, having heard of his difficulties, and imagining what, in all probability, he came for, desired the

servants to say they were "out of town:" taking a leaf out of Melmont's book as far as this expression was concerned, though certainly not as far as conduct so ungenerous was.

Coming away from one of these fruitless endeavours to find some friend—just to "give him a lift," now he was temporarily broken down ("temporarily" only, as he trusted)—whom should he fall in with but Mr. Cymon.—Here was a man who had always professed himself our hero's friend,—the admirer of his talents—even the imitator of his style,—purloiner of his expressions, and panegyrist of his acquirements. But whence, and wherefore was all this good will and admiration? Because the said Cymon had considered Melmont to be in flourishing circumtances;—had, in fact, heard some whisperings of a title to which Melmont had a latent claim—or so he fancied;—he saw, too, that our hero made a

figure in society. All this was, perhaps, at the bottom of Cymon's admiration and friendship,—at least so it seemed; for, after a very cordial greeting on his part, and some conversation on indifferent subjects,—in which Mr. Cymon, as usual, bepuffed and bepraised his "friend,"—this friend was emboldened to state his difficulties; just at that moment, imagining, doubtless, that with a person of Cymon's professions and wealth withal, there could be little obstacle to his being now able to get accommodated. But how did the jaw of the *sieur* Cymon drop on finding such a "turn" given to the conversation! Excuses were blundered out with all the awkwardness of a mean, shabby and grovelling spirit; and this unwillingness to assist him being perceived by Melmont before it was half expressed, he begged his "friend" not to mention anything more about the matter, with

which he regretted having troubled him; and seeing, too, his "friend" wriggling about in order to walk away, Melmont abruptly took leave of him, giving him a look of contempt that even made the callous dulness of this natural booby feel an inward qualm. "What a degrading vice," thought Melmont, "is meanness! If this animal had not been blessed with an enormous revenue I would not have asked any assistance of him. What want of liberality—of feeling! Such a fellow as this is wrongly called a "gentleman"—that is, a "being of generous spirit." So he valued me entirely, hitherto, because he fancied I was in flourishing circumstances! If ever I am, again, I shall see this miscreant coming fawning up to me afresh.—Poor wretch! I pity him. Pity is it, his natural want of generosity and sensibility was not in some measure remedied by

a grain or two of early education! Here is a man on whom wealth and station have been thrown away, as much as pearls would be on swine!" So saying, Melmont pursued his way to a noted Jew lender's. As he hurried through various obscure streets in the city to arrive at the money-lending goal, he saw a form emaciate, pallid, squalid as "*dira Fames*" herself;—the eye caught his—it was his old acquaintance at College—Harvey Such was the name of that unfortunate person who has been slightly mentioned as the natural son of Sir Lewis Masterton, and abandoned by his father after having had the education of a gentleman, but placed in no way of obtaining a maintenance for life, consequently the poor man had been obliged to live by his "wits," as it is called; that is, gaining a scanty and precarious sustenance by writing "articles" in different

periodical publications; but often and often had he been at a loss for bread in consequence of some mishap or other, such as delay—independently of the question of merit or not. Under these shifts what was to be done? Tuition at times offered a bitter and hard-earned remuneration, but this was accompanied with disgust; for, unfortunately for poor Harvey, he was a man of genius and ambition beyond his means. The works of mind that he delighted in, were not of the order to interest the lounging reader, for instance, of a club; and, though a transitory pleasure was afforded to him in the pursuit of what was congenial to his taste, the bitter tax he paid was poverty, destitution, and want.

Melmont was much affected at learning these particulars from Harvey; and, promising to come and see him very shortly, he pressed him

to accept five sovereigns out of the last twenty he had, and then hied on to find out his Jew—with a heavy heart, as much for his illused and talented friend as for himself. Such is life! The more experience a man has in it, the more he knows what misery and hardships are! On he went—but was suddenly stopped by a person (who was no other than Starling) violently pulling his sleeve behind. He thought at first some pickpocket was practising on him, and turning sharply round, accosted the man with a desire to know what he wanted.

"Come this instant with me, if you wish to save from destruction—or, at any rate, from insult—one who is dearer to you than you are at present aware."

"Whom do you speak of?—what can you mean?"

"When I say a lady stands in need of your

assistance, need I add a word more to induce you to accompany me?"

"What lady?" cried Melmont in alarm, lest this was some intelligence of Sir Jasper's having seized on Alice, or some agent of his having invaded her asylum for the purpose of assailing her at second-hand with denunciations on his part, and assurances of abandonment in case she were distressed from his (Melmont's) bad circumstances. His mind was somewhat relieved on Starling's answering—No, it was not his wife; and one that, even were he not married, never could be so!

"What can you mean?"

"You shall know all in good time. Meantime follow me; and you will, perhaps, one day have reason to thank me for having taken you out of your way so unceremoniously."

It may be supposed whither it was that

Starling conveyed our hero: it was to the old "haunted house;" and not by the front way but by the vaulted passage. They arrived at length at the grated mouth of it, through which our hero made his exit on his first visit to this skulking-place of mischief; and what scenes he entered on, on his arrival, remain for another Chapter to show.

CHAPTER XX.

THE RESCUE.

Good Sirs, you're come in happy time.

THE REPRISALS.

LA MARRE had not ceased his degrading solicitations to the lady, who, it appears, was his prisoner in the haunted house: a generous spirit would have felt doubly the obligation of showing kindness to a female dependent on him for succour, support, and countenance; on the contrary, he took advantage of her mortifying situa-

tion. But at the expense of being abandoned to the buffets of fortune, and obliged to seek a maintenance by teaching, or even service, if the worst came to the worst, she repulsed all his offers and solicitations, all his disgusting endearments, with indignation. There is no saying so true as that which affirms "where love has failed of obtaining any return, its place is usurped by as confirmed a hate." Such was the case with La Marre, who, being unable to obtain the triumph he had been anxious for, less from any dictates of passion than from some very sordid feelings of policy which will be hereafter more explained, was now basely determined to carry humiliation and insult in the instance of Elvira still further. During his short visit to Cheltenham, amongst others who had attached themselves to him was (as has been seen) Sir Lewis Masterton. This man, weak and vain, and fond of appearing on terms of

intimacy with people he fancied "of distinction," La Marre had drawn into his net for purposes of swindling, and in the present instance had fixed on him to be the channel of his efforts towards humiliating Elvira: in a word, he had the baseness to propose making her over to Masterton, not only to secure a sum of money from him for so doing (which was to be effected, as is usual with swindlers, in the "honourable way" of gaming), but to place her own dependence on himself in a more striking light; since, if she rejected and spurned the addresses and proposals of Masterton with indignation, as she certainly would, La Marre then hoped that finding she would have no quarter from himself, unless she would compromise, in order to rescue herself from certain abandonment—he then hoped (it seems) that she would listen to him, La Marre. Such was his base project to drive his fair victim

to desperation, and to the completion of the scheme of villany which he was, in other respects also, secretly plotting, as will be hereafter seen; at the same time he was making Masterton his victim, or dupe, as being the weak instrument of this manœuvre. The character of this man peculiarly fitted him to be imposed upon in a matter of this kind: he chuckled over the jocose suggestions of the swindler Count to "play for a prize worth having!" a creature so beautiful that he might bless himself for having merely seen her! All this precisely suited the character of a man as vain in his claims to be in favour with the sex as he was to be the apparent friend of persons of distinction, as he considered it; at any time they had only to propose anything and he was too ready to comply: the weakness of old age too, aided much the doting delight with which Masterton addressed himself to this

piece of disreputable jugglery, in which he was to be the loser, worthy of the reprobate who instigated it, and worthy of the loose and vain character of himself too—the poor tool or puppet who was thus induced to figure for his own exposure and at his own expense. Thus, however, it was to be: the swindler had considered the excuse or inducement a good one to arrive at the possession of Masterton's money,—for no expedients do swindlers leave untried with the weak, the vain, the purse-proud, to make their dupes bleed—as indeed such dupes deserve to do, however great scoundrels their betrayers may be.

Well, Masterton had returned to town in the wake of the "Count," and by invitation had repaired to the Haunted House, whither he was conducted by the "Count" himself, who led him as determinedly his victim as an animal led by a butcher to be slaughtered. On his

arrival La Marre had an interview with Elvira, in which he artfully concealed the depth of his resentment and mortified pride for her rejection of his overtures, and so far satisfied her mind that he intended no further mortification to her, that he prevailed on her (which she permitted, perhaps, from a feeling that it was better to comply than possibly subject herself to worse misfortunes) to join a party he said he was obliged to give to his "friends" of distinction; of which, indeed, he had a good many, as above mentioned, and which she knew to be the case. His object having been now obtained of getting her to appear at "this party," as he called it, all he cared about was gained; accordingly, himself and some of his subaltern swell swindlers met his "friend" Masterton, at dinner, where they did not fail to see that the "ancient juvenile" obtained a due exhilaration from wine,

which they took care to increase after dinner in double proportion. The weak old man chuckled, talked, and caroused like a true worthy of the old school; and singular is it to see how in an age when temperance is the order of the day—its chaste discipline is infringed on by the "staunch" members of the old school, who still show a hankering after their "pottle deep potations," in spite of civilisation, and the universal use of light wines. Masterton, as may be supposed, was not in the best condition for cards after dinner, though in the very best that his companions could have wished him. It may be supposed that it was not very long before the contents of our poor knight's pockets began to find a rapid vent.

"The lady! the lady! Sir Lewis—you will win her after all!" said the Count, with a sneering laugh, which poor Masterton was too

self-sufficient to perceive. "Come, you are playing the 'Venus*' against us now!"—as he suffered his dupe to win for a short run,—"Like the Roman revellers, you are triumphant, but you not only throw the 'Venus' but you shall see her!—you shall have in sight the happy prize, and which you are blessed in winning!"

One of his followers here, by a preconcerted plan, rang a bell, as a signal, and instantly the tapestry hanging, which screened one end of the room, was drawn away, and laid open before the astonished view of the hoary gallant a splendid room (the old chief drawing-room of the house), illuminated and decorated in the most splendid array of festivity. Meantime the music burst forth in a peal of revelry—the circles of dancers were in motion—females (of what character,

* Quem Venus arbitrum dicet bibendi.—HORACE.

plied with partners from the
Marre.

" But where is your fair p
said La Marre; " wait a n
shall see her presently; I v
bring her in, and introduce h
will treat her with all due fo
meantime enjoy the bustle, ar
and the music—formality or
please her best, I need not say i
so many people; but when they
dropped away, then you can pl
happy man may you consider yo
win her: at present be thankfu
won the privilege to speak to he

the vanity of Masterton, "she has already refused the proffers of two dukes and an odd dozen and a half of grandees of different grades: it will be for your peculiar address to improve your suit."

The Count then went out to lead Elvira into the room, to join the party he had prevailed on her to meet. He knew well enough that any impertinence on the part of Masterton would meet with a due rebuff,—this was all he wanted; she would then be doubly thrown on himself, from a wish on her own part that he should no longer subject her to the insult of proposals from other persons. On this errand, then, did he go forth—the tyrant over as lovely a captive as ever dependence and helplessness subjected to the scorns of fortune and domineering of villany. Old Masterton, meantime, like another

himself in a long pier glass fr
rubbed his withered visage d
sooth all complacency with hir
the Count entered, handing in
rather above the middle siz
carriage, majestic in her air,
beautifully pale, and her fore
locks of the most brilliant bl
arms were of polished white
the rich bracelets she wore; h
black velvet. La Marre led
Lewis, and introduced her, a
mirror of knighthood fell into
together, after some awkward a

quite a different character from that which he had been deluded (for purposes of imposture) into expecting; he found the person he addressed was all mind! Libertine as he was by habit (and consequently one of the worst of libertines, being confirmed in the disease of libertinism), he felt impressed with an awe which even he was conscious of from her very look, before she spoke; he dared not enter on any subject calculated to offend the strictest delicacy! But seeing La Marre smile (in reality as enjoying his embarrassment), he imagined it was a smile of ridicule at his want of spirit in quailing before the object of his ambitious raptures.

La Marre much enjoyed the old beau's perplexity. The crowd had now dropped away—there was no one left but Elvira, the Count, and Masterton.

"Now is your time, Sir Lewis; it was all

were lookers-on—it wa
quite in character with her
Count to his dupe, who wa
himself to play a somewhat mo
and on La Marre's urging h
commenced, as well as he co
testations and vows which t
comprehend at first, as she h
in Masterton's previous beari
that could at all lead her to sup
her any indignity; but, whe
what must really have been the
rose, she insisted on being a
draw, and made her way to t
however, her passage was inte
Marre himself, who ungenerou

of dependence, and the mockery and empty pride of circumstances like hers. This inhuman speech, to say nothing of its violation of propriety, she was about to answer as it deserved, when the door against which La Marre stood was thrown violently open, to his consternation and that of Sir Lewis, no less than to the surprise of Elvira—and pleasure, it is needless to say—when she found that the persons who entered, came in her cause; as if Providence had listened to her silent as well as expressed entreaties for some time, for rescue from the baseness and degradation she was subject to under this detested roof *.

"Wretch!" cried Melmont, for it was he that first made his appearance in the room; "Heaven be praised that your own villany has edged instruments of vengeance against itself!

* See Richardson's "Clarissa."

treated la

indignities."

Here La Marre, having r
surprise, put on a swaggerin
with all the conscious weakne
and also of guilt, opposed as it
intention, justice and honour
"Who gave you licence to i
I hold you guilty of a trespass
"Who gave me licence?" rei
indignantly: "I consider that
guided me hither! Providenc
ment this worthy person," poin
who had accompanied him, "is
"Base, traitorous ingrate!"
addressing himself to this ma

violate my privacy, and insult me in my own house."

"Lived so long on you!" retorted Starling; "been your slave rather!—forced to be so on the grossest terms, namely, of subscribing to your villanies; but I will no longer subscribe to them! I will vindicate my freedom from such degrading shackles, and atone for my past subserviency or submissiveness to compulsion—by trampling you under foot."

"Trampling me under foot!" cried La Marre, furious with passion at being thus braved by an underling, as he had considered this man.

"Yes, I repeat the words!" said Starling, coolly.

"No more!" cried La Marre, "I will hear no more!" he said, as Starling was going on to speak. "Both you, and this youngster here,

shall suffer for this impertinence. This beggar (meaning Melmont), whose fortunes you appear now to be following, had better take care how he engages a traitor in his service; and you, too, will meet, in your certain destitution, the just reward of attaching yourself to a penniless adventurer!"

"A penniless adventurer, Count! Is it thus you designate me? Not so penniless, probably, as you imagine. This good man will perhaps explain to you one or two little matters that may serve to show you how altered my present situation is from that in which you would have placed me by your villany!"

Melmont turned contemptuously from La Marre as he said these words, and addressed himself to the lady, who spoke earnestly to him in another part of the room, most probably on the treatment she had received, while Starling

and La Marre proceeded thus, poor Masterton was ready to sink through the floor, all this time, in his confusion.

"Bitterly shall you repent this," said La Marre. "Tremble, wretch—your life—"

"My life even is not safe, is it not?" rejoined Starling. "Take my life if you can—take it as soon as you please, since I have now been revenged on you for your treatment of me!"

"I laugh at your absurdity. Go, follow the fortune of the bragging pauper who is now your leader. What protection can a man not worth a farthing give you?"

"Softly, softly, Count, as you call yourself." (La Marre bit his lip with fury, and secretly dreaded some mischief from the confident tone of the man.) "Softly, Count," repeated Starling, with a most contemptuous emphasis upon the word Count. "You have hitherto relied, it

appears to me, a little too much on a certain will you claim under of that gentleman's father. I it was, whom you suborned to destroy that will (as you thought), I being your then agent with Mr. Melmont, as you had not quite time to arrive at the spot. Your confidence in me made you believe I had destroyed it. But no! I kept it by me, to see if all those promises you had held out to me of elevating my condition in life would really be answered. No such thing! You have only continued to insult me by refusing the justice of any such claim."

"You were always exorbitant in your demands," interrupted the Count.

"No such thing! I only required the measure of reward due to your great promises —too great, indeed, for me to place much reliance on; so I am determined to place reliance on myself! Yes, Falder (for such is

your name), yes—you, the late superintendent of Mr. Melmont's affairs, his right hand in everything (his agent, his steward, his solicitor, all combined), and I your tool and Mercury—I saw into your character, and the baseness with which you, out of money you had purloined from him, lent it to him again, upon mortgage of the property you stewarded for him, and thus ruined him and his son as to the foreign property; and not content with this (which I well saw through, too), you wanted to cut off his heir, by a false will, of all the English estates! I will confess I had my compunctions—I was not a villain by nature. I was determined, in fact, to keep the power of doing justice in my hands."

"Of being a traitor!" burst out La Marre, and rushed at Starling as if about to strike him with a knife which he seized from one of the

darted forward and wrested the
hand, which La Marre had mad
and Starling narrowly escaped
dangerously, the knife having
as he started back and held it
himself and ward off the blow fr

"Let us parley no longer wit
cried Melmont, as he dashed L
him with such violence that it ma
backwards till he found support a

"Know, Falder (for I little sus
and La Marre were one, till n
here to tell you no other tale tha
have always told you, namely, th
but my grounds for telling you s
confident and firm! The will we

own agent as fictitious. That is sufficient, of itself, to leave me my right of inheritance—the right I have always maintained, and on the credit of which I have lived till now as becomes my station. That credit I am now enabled to make my acknowledgments for, and to satisfy the demands of; but I do not alone stand on my right of inheritance. This honest man, Starling, has surrendered to me the will of my late father, which the weak state of health he subsequently fell into, caused him to forget, and to be willing to listen to any proposals you might have made, to induce him to make a new will in your favour; but this, your agent has frustrated! You were not on the spot at the time of my father's death, and your being a little too late has perhaps prevented a villany you would have been glad to exult in. As for the mortgage you pretended to, on the

instituted to set it aside on the g
and this honest man's testimo
me. Judge, then, if I have ba
you? Repent of your late vi
the country, whose soil you co
assured your character shall l
have too long insulted society by
and made it the dupe of your i
I have nothing more to say to yo
self, I am now above you in fo
before in honour. The viper th
father's vitals, while he was ch
bosom, I do not wish to crush in
than leaving him to his own remo
ing him to rid English society o

lady?—an orphan, thrown upon your kindness—educated by you worthy of the situation of a lady—for what purposes? Have all her sensibilities, and those of her sex—given her by nature, and fostered and heightened by education—only been given to heighten the insult you meditated? A calmer and more systematic piece of plotting villany I never knew till now. What she has told me, I will not repeat; but did you merely polish her mind, and bring her up in the way that your means have well afforded, to dare to degrade her by proposals of being your mistress? Infamy! infamy!—unmanly baseness! All that you have done against me sinks into nothing before an act so atrocious—an infamy yet heightened by the insolent and mean revenge you have this evening endeavoured to gratify, by yet further humiliating a pride and delicacy you had yourself fostered in her education. As for this dotard,"

reflect that he is tottering on a
grave; — let him feel with ho
conduct of the kind he has bee
upon him; — let him make l
Heaven, for the short time he n
tinue his journey on earth, by
for his disgraceful conduct—am
duct, too. Yes, Sir Lewis," pu
"you have a son—for the misf
birth he is not culpable. He
and you are—I am ashamed
say—playing the part of a hoa
the offspring—perhaps of seduc
sent into this wretched world,
own controul!) is dying of wan
more—you know to whom I

you have to charge yourself with. As to your conduct to this lady—unless (as she has led me to determine) you were merely the dupe of this scoundrel, and scarcely master of your own actions—I would let you understand what I required of you, according to the rules of honourable reparation. Let it be a sufficient lesson to you to know, that you have been made a fool of by a knave and an upstart. And as for him—he is beneath the idea of any honourable demands of reparation; the law might pursue him for false imprisonment of her person. But no more," he continued, turning to Elvira; "I shall best serve you by taking you away at once from this den of iniquity——"

"Not till you have seen this villain," interrupted Starling, "in the full glare of his atrocity. The lady you have been assisting is—your own sister!"

short; his fury—his grief—ni
contention, overwhelmed him b
of any description to say what h
of his having been so treated.

Sir Lewis, trembling from
was ready to sink on his k
pardon for his rashness and i
person he had been led to ad
tered out some excuses, express
rence of La Marre; while M
with the convulsion of passion,
to articulate the words he now
Marre:—

"Wretch! let me get away f
or I may have to answer for y
La Marre had never befor

to madness, of gamesters ruined (and by his own arts); but never till now saw the inward workings of the soul so terribly expressed in the countenance. He involuntarily, though a daring man, trembled. His conscious guilt aided his confusion; however, he endeavoured to rally, and, summoning all his native impudence, he retorted on Starling, as he exclaimed—"Insolent liar! what limit or measure is there to your treasons? What is it you have the hardiness to assert? What is it you dare——"

"No prevarication, Falder," said Starling. "I have dealt long enough in aiding villanies my conscience always repudiated and rejected. I was again your agent in this business. When this gentleman (turning to Melmont) was sent to England for education, you know that his father and Mrs. Melmont were living abroad, and that she died in childbed, of a daughter.

She was then on her way to join Mr. Melmont, who had been living in the south of France, whilst she was staying at Paris. It was your object, if possible, to build your interests on the ruin of Mr. Melmont's family. This child you had privately taken from the house by an infamous woman you bribed to answer your purposes, under the assumed confidential part of a nurse; and I, the trust-worthy jackall, then, of your plans, was to convey it to a peasant-woman, by whom the child was reared as her own, and who was considered by this lady as her mother, till the poor woman died, when she imparted to her that she was not her mother; though who was,—she did not know. Thus far she told me, who was by, at the time of her death, by your desire. I did not forget to bear with the child some documents which I have since given her, which have served to show her who she was not,—though I

have never informed her who she was, until the present occasion. After the death of Mr. Melmont, you know well enough the plan you have pursued with respect to this lady. You have given her an education for the worst and basest purposes, (to heighten her attractions, and your hoped for triumph over her as a voluptuary,) but Providence has now graciously rendered it an ornament and blessing, for a better condition of circumstances. Deny this, ruffian! if you can! Nay, don't stamp your foot at me. But you, sir," turning to Melmont, "and you, lady, —may God bless you! and if I have any sins to answer for, I trust I may consider the anxiety I have had to do this piece of justice, will, in some measure, plead for me."

"Liar and dog!" (raved out Falder, as we shall henceforth call him — he scarcely knew how to proceed—he was at his wits' end)—"but not one of you," he suddenly exclaimed, "

escape me;" and pulling a bell violently, he was about to summon up his whole gang, amongst whom were characters desperate enough to have proceeded any lengths on such provocation as this, when Starling said in an under tone to Melmont and Elvira, "There is not a moment to be lost!" and extinguishing the light, by dashing down a large—and the only remaining chandelier that (late as it was) continued to hold any more wax lights in it,—he slid out of the room with Melmont and his sister (leaving La Marre and Masterton in utter darkness) into the gallery, where, snatching up a small brass lamp he had purposely left outside, he hurried them through a private door, that was scarcely distinguishable, in the wall, and had hardly closed it on the fugitives, before the clatter of feet on the staircase, the din of voices, and the cries and imprecations of La Marre, were heard, while the echoes of the crash that the huge chandelier had

caused in falling, were drowned in the uproar. The thieves, on finding La Marre, by the confusion they occasioned, rather impeded search for the fugitives than otherwise; however, search was vain! Starling alone had the key, or the knowledge, of this private avenue. His plot for revenge on La Marre had not been of yesterday! he had been long silently brooding over it, and forming projects for carrying it triumphantly into execution;—he had been hitherto thwarted in his expectations; he had commenced plans for revenge from the day that he had overheard La Marre's overtures to Elvira, from behind the tapestry * (for it was his voice that startled Falder in the midst of his base propositions). He now led the fugitives by a narrow gallery, which descended in a sloping direction for some way; and when they had come to the level ground, he informed

* *Vide* Chapter XIV.

them that they were some feet under ground; that this passage was one of many that had remained unblocked up, and had originally* been made as places of refuge by the Protestants in the time of the Catholic persecutions of Queen Mary, and, *vice versâ*, had served Catholics subsequently for the same purpose. "Some of these passages," he said, "have been blocked up; some, as the present, still remain open, as you see; and I, having in view the use of this outlet for escape on the present emergency, have tracked the whole extent of this, and found, some weeks ago, on trying it, that it was blocked up at a few feet further on; but from the hollowness of the sound, when the party wall was struck by me, I was inclined to think the passage was met by another, from which it was merely separated by a thin partition. I was not

* *See* Antiquities of London.

[redacted]

mistaken; I [illegible]
tion wall,—the [illegible]
by see, will [illegible]
traced on the [illegible]
so well known by [illegible]
cating with the [illegible]
escape in old [illegible]
fugitives [illegible]
heap of rubbish. [illegible]
were underneath [illegible]
they then [illegible]
point where the [illegible]
two directions [illegible]
the Thames). [illegible]
showing them the [illegible]
us to the cellars of a [illegible]

* The reader may, [illegible]
labyrinth himself, [illegible]

officers, as a place for smoking a
portentously called the 'Cigar
of the house has occasionally vi
but keeps it locked up, exce
from antiquarian curiosity, req
We shall be certain to m
domestics hear us when we a
of the cellar—and there is no i
close up the mouth of the vault
not make the servants hear, I h
which will easily find us a way
better to call out, and obtain c
can by the aid of the servants,
we were housebreaking should
selves into the house without

calling up to their minds the scenes of wretchedness, suspense, self-denial, and persecution, that the unhappy sufferers from religious cruelty underwent in times past—forced to fly the day in a gloomy asylum like the present, to save life, like the unhappy Ghebers of Eastern history. They were continuing to indulge these reflections, when the vault became more spacious; and from the stacks or heaps of coal in one corner, and the bottle-racks in another, they saw, by the dim glimmering of the lamp which Starling held, that they were come to the cellar of which he had spoken. He now began to beat loudly against the door, and waited for some time before any one could be made to hear, though at a house of this kind the people stayed up late; at last, his voice was heard, and a bevy of the domestics, with the master of the house at their head, came to the door. Star-

ling, who had scraped an acquaintance with this person, by his smoking visits to the "divan," as it was called, soon made an explanation, which was received, and more fully cleared up subsequently. Meantime the door was opened by a pretty little Irish damsel, a dispenser of cigars and coffee. Many apologies were now offered by Melmont for this untoward intrusion on the privacy of the house; and these being made, with rewards to the domestics for their attention in this rescue, the fugitives soon found themselves in the street; and Melmont, putting ten guineas into Starling's hand, told him his home would henceforth always be his, should he wish to attend him in any domestic capacity. The man then went for a time to a lodging, while our hero conducted his sister to an hotel, where he took apartments for her until he should be able to introduce her at a fitter time to

Alice, whom she was all impatience to meet (having briefly learnt from her brother that he had just married her), and also to see the good-natured Lady Shelwood.

END OF VOL I.

LONDON:
BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

OUT OF TOWN;

OR,

THE RECESS.

OUT OF TOWN;

OR,

THE RECESS.

CONTAINING

PASSAGES OF THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF ARTHUR MELMONT.

This above all—to thine own self be true.
HAMLET.

Ridentis speciem dabit et torquebitur idem.
HORACE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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OUT OF TOWN;

OR,

THE RECESS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SCENE SHIFTED.—A GLANCE AT THE DARKER SIDE OF THINGS.

Ich möchte doch fragen, warum hat er mich gemacht?. . .
Kann ich's ihm dank wissen, dass ich ein mann wurde.
SCHILLER. (*Franz's soliloquy in the Robbers.*)

I labour under a false accusation. THE CULPRIT.

OUR story now takes us, for a short time, from the English shores, to introduce a foreign character, that hereafter will appear more. It

sullenly at the foot of some rock
gling along the shore; no gle
brightened the atmosphere, or
monotony of gloom that hung
waters.

A young man was sitting u
rocks, absorbed in thoughts
nature, his eyes sorrowfully fix
of waters before him — a pr
cheering as that of the unh
which his musings contemplat
certain appearance of distinct
humble dress he wore could
disguise—it was that of a seaman
light and graceful; his featur

in front, and waved over his neck, on either side, from under his hat; he constantly drew out a portrait from his bosom, of some one that seemed very dear to him, and gazed on it, while the tears involuntarily stole into his eyes. The train of his musings, which, from time to time, he gave utterance to, was as follows:—if he had known poor Harvey, mentioned in the preceding volume, he would have sympathised with him; for he, too, was abandoned by a father—but in the present instance there was a false accusation complained of:—"Is it more hard to gain credence for the truth, than for the base and cutting aspersions of falsehood?—Is there truth in life?—Is it possible that the author of my days, should have been more willing to lend an ear to the malevolence that defamed me in my absence, than to the vindication of my innocence by myself, and by her also,

that of 'father' indeed sound
soul, as expressive of all th
harsh....I say it with regre
forced to feel it in this aband
tution—this proscription!....B
not men incur—what baseness
they not be capable of, wher
are the principles of action?
interest is the idol of which th
as it is of him to whom I
my father's injustice and my
Spirits of this kind would no
even the hope of eternal peac
possession of that deity—tha
which they bow—gold!...I a

supplications have I left unpleaded, to one who seems determined to hear nothing but calumny and falsehood! What revenge (the next resort man looks to when redress is denied) can I ever hope to obtain?—to attempt to take it would only be to aggravate the appearances of guilt that are already presented in such hideous colours for my condemnation—alas! too successfully?—as much so, as falsely! Heaven is my witness, that in that unhappy encounter,—my adversary—one dear to me, too, as Antonio,—fell by no base, no unfair means!—Is it possible any man could be found so base—of my own kindred—my own father's brother—to forge the cruelties of a falsehood so shameful!—Alas! I am wretched—to have raised the hand, though in fair combat, against the brother of her who was dearer to me than life itself! How cruel was the alternative. Yet worse,—how fatal the

those cruel circumstances ha
wrung from me by a sense of
of misfortune!...Why, For
our hearts biassed towards ea
souls, indeed, united, when
circumstances called our destin
Yet, can I blame myself for
attachment? Could I avoid i
could I do otherwise than rep
affection, of one so estimable,
lovely? Dear reflection," he
looked at the portrait which
who was gentlest and fairest o
could speak, you would acq
ever attempted to influence a
not already expressed to me

we loved, that was our crime, our happiness, and our punishment! Why could not your friends, dearest, lost Fornarina, listen to the honour and earnestness with which I spoke about our attachment? Why was a cause for quarrel sought when every reparation, if any were due, was offered? The hand that was offered was rejected by them—Fornarina was betrothed to another: a rash as haughty brother's spirit could not admit of reparation, nor brook reconciliation; no reparation but the blood of one who loved him, seemed adequate—of one who had rather the steel had been buried in his own breast than raised against the brother of Fornarina. You look on me, sweet image, with the same approving regard with which she used to answer mine. You say to me, she knew that I was not utterly culpable! that the consciousness of designed guilt never rested on my

oul!—she said yet more in exculpation of me. She died, breathing this—and accusing herself rather than me!...All the bliss of life, all the bias that hearts feel towards one another, is but as so much poison poured into the cup fate mixes for us,—is but as a snare, laid in a fair path, to betray us into ruin. I am an outcast from the bosom of my home—abandoned by my friends! my name branded with the cruel and defamatory title of murderer, despoiler, seducer! my sufferings are the accumulated load of unjust accusation—of the loss of her I adored—of the hopelessness of ever reinstating myself in the fairer light in which I ought to stand, and to which an unjust parent holds himself wilfully blind. Heaven, I repeat, knows, that when Antonio fell, no dishonourable stain disfigured my sword, or my name! but man, too, is my witness. Melmont! you were near on that fatal

evening! Melmont! my friend, (and though a stranger—yet worthy of being dearer to me than my own kindred)—you can exculpate me. Would that I knew where I might find you, or whither you fled, after that unhappy fray, to which you accompanied me, when safety compelled all parties to hasten from the spot. In your own country I will seek you. Yes! I have yet a witness of my innocence! I will yet trust in heaven, that I may put to shame the effrontery even of false accusation, by the presence of an honourable man and a fair witness!...But, my child," he added, after a pause, suddenly recollecting himself, "I fear I have delayed too long from thee—it were hard if thou art doomed to follow thy lost mother—it would be hard to be robbed of thee and my Fornarina too. I must hasten back to watch over thee, if Heaven will yet spare thy life; for, indeed, thou art now my

pied, and hastening along th
way, turned up towards a
led over a low-browed dusky
the rubbish of an old ruine
and sprinkled over with fur
it led to two or three stragg
and a little inn or cabaret, not
of the public road that ran
As Lavotin (such was the y
approached the door of the
hostess came out to meet hi
sorrowful, that they informe
had little to hope of improve
of his poor child whom he ha

"I see," he said, "as he
the old woman, "you have

left it with you, or I should not have gone away for an instant."

"Ah, sir! the poor dear little creature!" exclaimed the goodwife in a French *pâtois* (to which it is not worth while to give a parallel in English), "it was, indeed, better when you left it; but only a minute or two past it was seized with such convulsions again, that I fear the sleep it is now in ——"

"Is its last, you would say. Speak out, good woman: I am no stranger to bitter tidings, and have a heart so familiar with grief, that it only surprises me if I do not perpetually hear of, or light upon, something to distress me:—for any temporary respite from suffering I bless Heaven —but I never expect any!—Let me see the remains of my poor, my darling infant," continued Lavotin, as he followed the old woman to the little low chamber in which lay this too early

bitterly as he hung over w
and pressed its cold lips to
tears fell on its fair infant fa
ful appeal was uttered to e
for ever deaf to the voice
sorrow. In this last partic
grave yields a blessing! The
that lives in the silent apat
strikes us with terror, becaus
or of happiness is chilled
console us, on the other h
greater proportion!) to think
of pain and anguish, the m
lament of wrong and disap
hushed, absorbed, quelled—

silent death, which puts a termination to all human suffering?

By degrees the bitterness of Lavotin's grief became subdued; he was more calm. "It is the remembrance of your mother's griefs, unfortunate infant," he said, still gazing on the pale features of his child, "that excited this turbulence of sorrow in me; it is thy resemblance to her beauties that awaked all the war of passionate sorrow within me, and what I have paid of grief over thy chill remains is an offering too to her memory. For thee, form of innocence and infancy! I mourn less, except from the pardonable selfishness that felt thou wert my only consolation after thy mother's loss; but for thyself I grieve less, inasmuch as thou art spared perhaps a lot of misery through the bitter pilgrimage of life, on which hard journey thou wert ushered by one so unfortunate as me! I would

that echo through these mis
harsh than the voice of the
and the scoff of its neglect,
its persecution. Would thy
age, been snatched from am
art! Peace be with thee!
shall perhaps meet with tha
ther, who is gone before the
who mourns over thy deat
shall again meet her and th
that meeting soon be pern
hung in silence for some tim
of his child, when he was su
his mournful reverie by the
the wheels of a carriage and

horses. Lavotin had little of the curiosity that impels idle people to gape at whatever passes by, whether it concerns and interests them or not, even supposing he had no such mournful subjects to occupy his mind as he had, so he sunk again into the reverie from which he had been momentarily aroused. Meantime the carriage drove off on its way. When at length he left the room, he was struck by the mention of a name he overheard, which seemed to disturb him with a poignant and bitter interest. A fisherman, who was looking over his nets at the door of the cabaret, was asking the hostess who it was that had just driven from the door.

"Oh, some great foreigner," she answered, "as the postilion said when I asked him."

"What was his name?" again inquired the man.

"I think it was some such name as Vasi or Varsi; no, Vasari—that was the name."

... what do you say

The good woman starte
face, surprised at his em
"I was only mentioning t
tleman who stopped a mo
door in the carriage."

"Was it indeed Vasari
to, and did not know it
"he is then perhaps persu
as myself, yet—what a dista
us!" He said these word
turned away from the old
hastily on the track which th
sued, looking after it to see
cern it. "No, it is gone," h
of a few moments; "and eve

to see me thus destitute, in this humble guise unbefitting my rank? Alas! would not the sight of my poor dead infant have softened his heart? No matter—it is the will of Providence that I should be hunted by affliction, and denied the means, or the hope at present, of extricating myself. Oh, God! why was I sent into this world of sorrow to be thus miserable during life, and to take my chance of misery through an endless hereafter? Selfish man should reflect.....alas! he is too selfish, too much the slave of passion and sensuality, to admit of reflection—(he must be so—it is his vile nature—) but if he could pause, he might think—'what misery, perhaps, of another to be born, is dependent on himself!'—(as Franz says in his impassioned soliloquy)—that a being may be brought into the world to blame its existence, and him who is the author

to rescue the lot of a chil
and destitution that woul
poignantly—yet too justly—
author of its days. How h
days acted towards me? W
have this gratuitous load of
forced upon me in the bein
without my possible concu
known the terms of existe
accepted them? Can I thank
seeing it has turned out what
I? 'nothing.' Can I thar
'something,' only as an instru
and pain, of which I had bee
consciousness!"

ing may succeed to the gust of passionate argument, wrung from the grief which we may justly compassionate, while we are willing to forgive the impatience that the strongest minds are betrayed into under a keen sense of wrong, unalleviated affliction, and remediless persecution.

CHAPTER II.

A TRIP OVER TO ITALY—THE BAY OF SPEZZIA.

Though guilt walk in impunity awhile,
Trust me, just heav'n marks out th' avenging day,
When retribution's lightnings shall confound
And crush the wretch, too vain, that hugs himself
In his security.

OLD PLAY.

AND now, in pursuance of circumstances connected with the last chapter, we must cross the Alps awhile....Fairest of climes, Italy! is it never possible to approach thee without the mention of some deed that stains the bright recol-

lections thou shouldst awaken, and casts a damp upon the glow of mind inspired by so lovely a subject? Yet so it is; in history, in romance, the rankling weeds of crime—flagrant crime—endlessly, insuperably deform thy beauties.

Can the marble hall, can the gallery lined with classic works of art—the statues that breathe, the living pictures—the odours diffused of the orange and myrtle, the gilded ceilings glittering in "barbaric pomp,"—can all the attributes of wealth and splendour give peace to the bosom of their guilty possessor? Would he not more happily occupy the humble cottage, on which he looks down from the proud marbled terraces of his palace, had he but the freedom from self-reproach that the poor peasant is blessed withal? Would he not better exchange for the rustic guise—the velvet pall and embroidered vest, if the heart beneath the former

beats light, when the bosom that pants beneath the last heaves with anxiety, restlessness, and fear? Is it enough to say, in answer to this, that in the habit of guilt, feeling is callous and conscience sleeps? that self-reproach troubles not the breast which can dare to commit what others shrink at the mention of, or that is corrupt enough to perpetrate what would bow the head in shame for ever of beings more sensitive, more alive to compunction—less steeled against the thought of misdoing? This is not reason sufficiently just or forcible to prove that a guilty breast is not necessarily an unhappy one; there are moments when the accusing phantom will start up, and scare its victim when least expected, however callous the breast may be, or self-reproach lulled to forgetfulness. If no other punishment await the evil-doer, the sting of this sudden accusation is no light one. But

it is not the only one; it is, generally speaking, but the fearful harbinger and menace of a just retribution on the head of the offender, though, for a time, indeed, his crime rests undetected.

The Count Vasari, when he left Italy for another clime, little imagined, when he confided the care of his possessions to his brother, in order to relieve the Countess of the charge, how deep an enemy against the cause of his own peace and interest, he was countenancing.

The Countess Vasari was a person of great amiability: she was not less, however, a person of spirit; her sagacity in the discernment of character was great; and it was not without sundry misgivings she acknowledged that so much confidence had been placed in one who had many causes of jealousy against the Count,

in consequence of the latter being in possession of estates that had once been the patrimony of this brother, who was the elder of the two. This patrimony had been squandered by Lanzi, (now the Abbate Lanzi—exemplary ecclesiastic!) such was his name, and by an accident had been bought up by the younger brother, who was now the possessor of it. The title of "Count Lanzi" remained to the elder, Vasari's title was held by another claim. That a feeling of discontent should occasionally arise in the bosom of a man who beholds what was originally his own, in the hands of one to whom he regarded himself as once superior in claim, is natural: the sight of the property thus transferred as it was, to another, was a constant reflection on the folly and imprudence that occasioned its forfeiture: so far, it is natural that a feeling of discon-

tent, of latent pique, of dissatisfaction, and regret should be, at times, entertained; but beyond this, no excuse can be alleged: we abhor the idea of deeper designs, tinged with guilt—the bitter indulgence not only of hate towards those whose property is coveted, but the exercise of baseness, of treachery, and crime in accomplishing a mean revenge on the persons themselves, and compassing, if possible, their ruin. Such was the plot that was being brooded over in the bosom of Lanzi, against his absent and confiding brother; such was the object he had been too successfully pursuing. The heir to the property he considered as quite set aside by his own machinations, by a villany practised against his reputation, which had perfectly degraded him, and indeed rendered him infamous in the eyes of the Count Vasari. Lanzi, however, that he might be the more certain

of getting rid of any inheritable claim from his brother, on the part of any one else, had by every means in his power endeavoured to secure to himself the papers relative to his brother's property (a crime unhappily too common in this country of "ladroni," where we are now supposed to be,—and not confined to the instance of La Marré). To these documents it was his object to give what construction he pleased, in favour of himself, an attempt which was rendered comparatively easy by Vasari's absence and the authority he felt himself so amply invested with. If we were shocked at the villany of La Marre in the preceding volume, we may feel even more so in the instance of this Lanzi, who had after his ruin, turned Churchman, and had become by family interest an Abbot, by which title we shall call him; the sanc-

tified character he assumed rendered him yet more trustworthy, and enabled him to cloak his designs and play the hypocrite with the greater security. However, the sanctity of this *Tartuffe* was not unsuspected, nor his motives unarraigned:—we have already hinted, in speaking of the Countess Vasari, that his character had not escaped her penetration. The vent she at length gave to her suspicions will better show how far she was determined, if she could, to arrest the progress of his baseness, and how intricately she had penetrated into his motives and the whole of the unworthy plot, in its various workings, which he had been sustaining.

Perhaps of all the beautiful spots in Italy there are none more so than those situated on the brow of the Apennines, and commanding a view of the lovely waters of the bay of Spezzia: it was in this region, not far from Sarzana,

that the Countess Vasari used chiefly to find delight, except that now her pleasure was somewhat marred by the presence of Lanzi. The *château* (the loveliest of Vasari's possessions) was situated on the brow of mountains clad with the foliage of the orange, the citron (or rather lemon), and the olive, all richly covered with fruit. Myrtles in full blossom luxuriated among them; the golden oranges glittered through the dark foliage like the stars which blazed through the deep blue vault of the heavens that glowed above. Silvery torrents from the mountains poured along their crystals, at times whirled headlong from precipices into natural basins formed by the rock, and then, combining their streams, rushed down in a column of waters. The spray that rose from the basins where the water was hurled with the greatest force, glittered in the rays

of the sun with various hues, like so many rainbows. The streams that fell down the sides of the hill blazed in the ray literally like columns of silver, supporting, as it were, the fabric or dome of the mountain; their course carried them headlong to the sea, but not before they had first formed a beautiful lake, also fed by springs, in front of the *chateau*. The stream proceeded on from the further end of the lake, forming a cascade, and then flowing on to the sea, its course being visible the whole way through vistas of the foliage we have just mentioned. Forming a striking contrast with the softer tints of the myrtle and orange, some dark pines threw their more sombre shadows upon the clear surface of the lake. This lovely sheet of water was approached from the *château* by a terrace which overlooked it, and skirted a pleasure ground that was a very

the old style witnessed in
Farnesina at Rome, and
and others, with walks a
at Versailles also)—ornam
these gardens spread for so
of the house, and it was o
overlooked them, that the
pened to meet the Abbaté I

After speaking on in
moment or two, the conve
we permit ourselves to ov
following turn:—

"It is impossible!" said
her voice; "Vasari would
up those documents—the tes

must request, therefore, that you will return them to my charge."

"Had I not authority—the fullest?"

"None: they were consigned temporarily to my custody on the Count's departure, and were subsequently to have been placed in the hands of the firm of —— at Florence for their safe keeping. You should not, then, in conscience and honour, have abused the confidence reposed in you as a friend merely—nor have attempted to obtain from those about me what, with my consent, should never have been given up."

"Heavens! can your ladyship imagine for a moment that any sinister motive would induce me to take into my own care, documents so important and valuable: nothing could induce me to assume such a responsibility, for which I do not claim any merit," he added, meekly, "more than that of regard for my

brother, and the strictest anxiety for Vasari's interest. I act in accordance with his request," said the plausible hypocrite.

"He never made any such request—you know he did not!"

"Impliedly," answered Lanzi, confused for the moment by her confident manner and his own consciousness of wrong; "impliedly, I must be allowed to say he did."

"Impliedly?" replied the Countess, tauntingly; "impliedly? Never I am sure directly; and never impliedly either, except according to your own somewhat jesuitical construction."

"Nay, you wrong me; have you not had opportunities of writing to him to ask him if all I have done was not with his desire, and for his advantage? Consider—here you are left alone, with many possibilities, in this wild and lawless district, of having property pillaged, and

what is most valuable to you lost! Am I not your own and my brother's benefactor?" he added with a sigh, and turning his eyes up to Heaven with all due sanctimoniousness.

"I want no benefactor in this respect, to ward off dangers that are merely represented to me, to terrify me into a compliance with a mode of conduct I consider uncalled for and unjust. I must repeat my request, that what has been sequestered from my keeping by your influence, and without my authority or consent, may be restored me immediately."

"I cannot do otherwise than regard the wishes of my absent brother; and as my conscience dictates to me that I am serving him and his interests in what I am doing, I shall not alter my purpose nor recal my actions;—the blessed saints be my witnesses!"

"Your conscience!" exclaimed the Countess.

"If you are so distrustful of my disinterestedness and regard for my brother, why not write to him, to mention all that you apprehend?"

"I have done so, and am surprised that no answer has yet reached me." Meantime it is due to the marvellous candour of the Abbaté's character, to observe here, that he had taken good care to intercept all the Countess's letters, which, by this time, might be safe in the flames, or at the bottom of the lake, for aught we know. He continued in reply, in true hypocritical and jesuitical strain:

"Surely, as he betrays no anxiety to set you right on what you consider so much amiss, and so contrary to his wishes, it appears like a proof that all concerning which you have told him is agreeable to his desires, as I have said. You really

are mistaken; and may well quiet your mind in the certainty of my affection for my brother, and regard for both your own and his interests."

"Regard for our interests! Was it in this feeling that you worked so assiduously in setting a father against his son? I have received a letter from my son Gustavus to say, that the whole account you gave to the Count, of his conduct, was a cruel and unfounded one."

What this alleged conduct was, remains hereafter to be more fully explained: at present we will not break through the thread of the conversation we are engaged in relating.

"If Gustavus," answered the Abbot, "acted as he did, in the face of the most sacred laws of humanity and honour, was it not a charity to you and to his father to let you and him know the truth? I should thank any one for opening my eyes to any stain in my

family, that I might at once repudiate,—cut off the impure branch—and save the stock unimpaired!"

"You have, indeed, done your best to lop off the branch, but not because it was tainted; but because you wanted, in its place, to engraft a branch that was really tainted! Too fatal have your efforts been, to poison the ears of the Count against his son! In vain have I pleaded! you and your coadjutors have been too early in the field and too strong for me, and for him, poor unhappy, persecuted youth! But your baseness," added the Countess, her indignation rising more warmly at this point, "your baseness will ere long meet with it's reward! What! to brand my son as a murderer!"

"I never branded him as such: I merely stated facts for which the state of Naples proscribed him!"

In spite of all Lanzi's effrontery, his soul sunk within him, and shrunk as it were, powerless (as the arm of the offender in Scripture) before the scornful might and bitter indignation of a mother's just crimination of him. She replied to what he had just alleged—

"Facts, as you call them, which yourself first suggested, by false reports, to the state authorities."

"Never!"

"Add not falsehood to injury! You are the destroyer of my son's peace and mine indeed: he was never what your rancour has denounced him as being! I have his own handwriting, relating the whole transaction you so cruelly exaggerated, to which Heaven is a witness!"

"His own handwriting!" replied Lanzi, with a sneer and suppressed laugh.

"Yes, which I will believe beyond any of

is his witness!"

"Heaven his witness! V
on this side the tomb?"

"Infidel! hypocrite! belie
character! tamper not with
you may dread more, he has
as well."

"Who may that be? Som
him in his actions, I dare say

"If you require the name,
English gentleman, a friend o

"Melmont? I believe I
foreigner of that name bein
your son's—I know little mor
he would be a participator in

he did not feel would become a man of honour, or neither he nor my son would have known each other: he can well vindicate the innocence of my son."

By this time they had gained the top of the terrace, and had arrived at the vestibule in front of the château. The Countess took the opportunity of closing a scene which the thought of injury to her son's name had rendered too painful for her to support any further. She offered a silent vow to heaven as she passed on, that the baseness and guilt of Lanzi—of him whose very name she now shuddered at—might not long be unvisited by a just retribution.

CHAPTE

SIR JASPER IN A

My ducats! my

AND now, having seen
villany in the country
describing lies, and having

with which the preceding volume closed, to state that the next morning after they took place, Melmont lost no time in flying to Alice and informing her of the joyful change which his circumstances had taken. She was as much surprised as delighted, to hear of his having found a sister, whom he had always considered as having been lost to him from her cradle. Alice was all impatience to become acquainted with her; and—the introduction being over, it was not long before the two ladies felt a friendship for each other, and were linked in each others company and love as if they had been sisters and companions from infancy. Lady Shelwood was all joy, too; and it was with regret she saw Alice leave her house, to take up her abode with Elvira in a handsome residence which Melmont took for the occasion, ready furnished, near the park, and not very far from Lady Shelwood.

favour. Alice doubted not,
supported by the previous r
atory communications she ha
away all difficulties towar
and gain a full pardon f
disobedience. It may be s
bluff, Sir Jasper was in no sm
period in our last volume
daughter had taken flight:
circumstance—his first impu
against her as a "disobedi
strong, manœuvring, roman
ward, good-for-nothing, u
dulged, obstinate, whimsical,

belinked,' for to Gretna (that pest-corner! that 'clap-trap and good-bye-to-you' for runaway scrapegraces) I suppose she's gone! The hussy! I'll have her back," (he continued, in his rough characteristic style), "before this mumble-me mockery, broom-stick, higgledy-piggledy, hugger-mugger ceremony can give any scoundrel a privilege of calling her his, and thwarting my authority. Halloo! Jarvis! Thomas! Gregory!" he continued, ringing the bell violently, and calling to the servants whom he heard moving about in the passage,—the whole house being in confusion, what with searching for the lady in the house, and coming back from searching for her out of the house, and learning who the partner of her flight was,—of which circumstance, however, Sir Jasper had little doubt, when he understood our hero had left Cheltenham. "Order horses immediately! This very

stander-by, the worthy old b
tling over his natural good-h
been the very burlesque of
time Lady Lentworth sought
bade him be calmer,—howev
adding, in her quiet way, that
with a man of family and exp
daughter had taken this "ste
at any rate, worthy of her est
plishments and person."

"Don't talk to me of be
talk of the fellow's accomplish
and . . . a vile adventurer!
stuff!—you provoke me.

the passage from the dining-room where all this commotion took place,—he having remained there after dinner, in a fidget to learn any intelligence from the "couriers" he had sent out to gain news of the fugitives. The horses at length arrived; and Sir Jasper having intelligence that a lady and gentleman had passed by, in a carriage-and-four, towards Gloucester, away to Gloucester he went, as fast as he could—not in the old family carriage, as may be supposed. When he arrived at Gloucester, he was informed that a "couple" had indeed changed horses and gone on to Bath. That was quite sufficient for Sir Jasper. "Horses for Bath immediately! It must be that varlet Melmont and my daughter, or else they would not go rattling on, in such a runaway manner, at this time of night. I'll catch them, and a murrain on them! Come, put the horses

to!" It was not long before our worthy was on his pursuit again. On his arrival at Bath, he was informed that at the very house he was now stopping, there was a couple who had arrived with four horses. At this he was all exultation. "I thought I should have them! Where are they?—where are they?" He was answered that they had retired (as all good people should) for the night, and that it was impossible they could be called up at that hour. "Retired for the night!" exclaimed Sir Jasper. "Atrocious! What! and I in the house! Who would be a father! I insist upon being shown the room instantly!—let me be shown the room." In fact, there was no appeasing the storming and raving of the infuriated baronet, who had by this time raised all the domestics in the inn by his ringing and raving. They, after hearing his story, and seeing his

resolution, could do no other than show him up stairs. Imagine how he thundered at the door—imagine how the people in the room were amazed at this strange *réveil*—imagine how Sir Jasper stared, when the door opened, after repeated demands from within, as to—"What was the matter?" which was answered by Sir J. that a "great deal was the matter!" Yes, the door opened, and showed—not our hero, but an emaciate invalid, who with his wife had repaired in all haste to Bath, for the benefit of bathing. Sir J. opened his eyes and mouth and stood aghast, and gaping not unlike the sign that denotes the "mouth" in that strangely designated ensign termed the "Bull and Mouth." Coming to himself, at length, he stammered out an apology, while the poor invalid—arrayed in a red cotton nightcap bound round his head with a yellow riband, (a flannel wrapper round his throat), and

blue striped dressing-gown,—stood gaping with his yellow lantern jaws no less amazedly at the worthy baronet! Having sufficiently indulged in their mutual stare, and the mistake being cleared up, the door closed: the invalid tottered back shivering to his bed and to his anxious "rib," who had raised herself up to hear all this "parley;" while Sir Jasper, with two or three very excusable expressions of impatience on such an occasion, and at having been led on such a fool's errand, vowed eternal displeasure on the head of his daughter, and blaming himself for having been led on a false scent, and not going to Gretna at once. He considered that it would be to little purpose now, to pursue his route thither, so he composed himself as well as circumstances would admit, and,—since he could not sleep, and it was now past four o'clock—he ordered breakfast, and, this over, returned to Lady Lentworth at Cheltenham.

CHAPTER IV.

RECRIMINATION.

Talk long and loud, and end where we began.
ALL TO NO PURPOSE.

IT was in vain that Lady Lentworth endeavoured to appease Sir Jasper. Her endeavours at so doing served rather to heighten his impatience and anger. "How dare she," he said, "give herself away to any one, without my consent? What matters it that you say this Melmont, this seducer (for what is he better?)

was a person we looked upon favourably?—that makes the matter worse—much worse!—I could have understood his attempting this outrage, as exercised in defiance to any opposition,—but thus traitorously to take advantage of the fair footing on which he stood with us, to rob us of our peace and happiness—scoundrel! scoundrel!"

"Be composed, my dear Sir Jasper; it is past avoidance now."

"This is what excites my impatience ten times more!—if it were not past avoidance do you think I should stand complaining here?—No, no! I should be better employed in endeavouring to avoid it; at present my only consolation (wretched though it be) is to vent my distress."

"But what can be the good of——"

"My dear, you try to be provoking!—how can you so readily acquiesce in such an outrage

—such a disgrace!" and his wrath was somewhat kindled against his mild partner.

"I do not, indeed, acquiesce in what, on the contrary, I much condemn; but as, in all probability, Mr. Melmont would one day have married Alice with our full consent, nay, approbation, I am (as the past cannot be recalled) willing to reconcile myself to circumstances; though I do not at all give place to you, Sir Jasper, in blaming both him and Alice."

"A minx!—I have no patience with her!—How would she dare! I say," stamping with his foot, and walking hastily about the room.

"Nay, nay, Sir Jasper, moderate this——"

"My dear, don't talk to me of moderation!—This is all your fault—you always over indulged——"

"My fault, Sir Jasper?"

"You always over indulged this girl."

"My fault, Sir Jasper?"

"You never, took her enough into society; and hence she contracted idle, romantic notions."

"Was that my fault? or your's, for remaining so much pent up at Lentworth?—romantic notions!—no such thing."

"If you had expressed a wish to have passed more time in town it should have been done."

"She was scarcely 'out,' only last season—there has been no time to take her into society—no opportunity."

"Well, I care not about this: she might have seen more in the country, but instead of that, she has been kept almost entirely by herself—a novice—left to her own imaginations, which will always naturally turn to romance until the realities of life and the business and bustle of society efface these primary

conceptions. You should have brought her up less linked to your 'apron-strings,' Lady L.! —this is your fault—your fault!"

"Sir Jasper, you do me great wrong," replied Lady L., in her usual mild way; for, knowing well her husband's rough yet good-humoured character, she did not consider it worth while to pretend to be excited or angry by his accusations. "You do me wrong," she continued; "you know perfectly well that she often saw our friends who visited at Lentworth. Certainly, in the very out-of-the-way region where we are situated, there is no great opportunity for social intercourse; but she was not so much a novice as you are pleased to consider her. The fact is, I dare say the girl scarcely imagined she was doing wrong, for she knew we had approved of Melmont's suit; he is, in fact,

"Scoundrel!—he mu
with these stories goin
fortunes,' that if I had
his addresses previousl
acquiesced in them till
tered; and she must hav
the curse of having a fam
"A family!—what on
"One too many, if she
"Let me beg of you to
I have no doubt all will ye
"I have no patience!...p
what a pest a child is!—w
have a family, with the am

how to manage them! if you coax them as children you make yourself their slave, for they will do nothing without being wheedled and bribed into it; if you 'snub' them, it deadens and damps their spirits and feelings, and makes them hate you and themselves through life: then, when they get older, if you restrain them too much they will be the more anxious to oppose you, and shake off the shackles of restraint, elude your vigilance, and run into absurdities, and drive you mad; if you are indulgent, and let them have their own way, they will take advantage of that indulgence, and abuse such kind licence. What is to be done?—do what you will you can't be right!—plague and perplexity!—I wish to Heaven I had never married, or never had a daughter!"

In this way was Sir Jasper walking up and down the room venting his spleen, while Lady

L. made no opposition to his remarks,—when his harangue was somewhat broken in upon by the arrival of a letter from the fugitives, throwing themselves (as usual) upon the clemency of the parents, with strong assurances held out by Melmont, "that though appearances were against him, he had no doubt he should be able to satisfy Sir Jasper in this particular shortly, and that his fortunes would ere long wear a better aspect than at present." However—say what they would, these conciliatory arguments had little effect in soothing Sir Jasper; but he was most furious at the postscript, in which Melmont dutifully informed him, that before his next letter reached him, he hoped to be united to his beloved Alice, who was under the protection of a female friend. It was in vain Lady L. did all she could to pacify her stubborn lord; he was not of a temperament to be easily appeased when once exas-

perated. There was no date to the letter, so that he could not tell from what place it was written, or else he would have set out in pursuit of his daughter. In this "raving" condition (like an unwieldy, untamed animal) he continued for some days,—plague enough, no doubt, to his forbearing, easy, quiet wife! when at length the letter reached him that informed him of the nuptials—and that the bride was at Lady Shelwood's. A date was in this instance put to the letter, but it was too late for him to do any thing now towards marring the love-plot, except this, — that he vowed the marriage should not "stand;" it was "no valid contract;" it had not "his consent," and was therefore of "none effect!" And his intention was immediately to go to town, and annul the marriage as soon as possible, in spite of the

"No real friend!-
disobedient child—I d
I shall insist on takin
she richly deserves, and

Sir Jasper would no d
into execution while the
fortunately, induced by
"fit" of the gout seized
him *hors de combat* for
when he was able to
insisted on proceeding in
the carriage, and away he
driven off, before the post
joyful account of the alt
which our hero and his

Lady L. regretted had come too late for her hasty lord to be comforted with: meantime, she considered this intelligence as a reward for her own forbearance and calmness through the temporary confusion. She was rendered most anxious to see her daughter, whom she tenderly loved; and though she could not quite excuse her for this (at all times an imprudent step), yet, considering the highly honourable character of Melmont, and the great favour with which he had been looked on by herself and Sir Jasper, there was much to be said in excuse of Alice for having confided in him. The result entirely answered Lady L.'s expectations; she again regretted Sir Jasper had gone off just before the arrival of this happy letter—however, he would soon learn all. Nor was Lady L. much less anxious to greet the newly-found sister of her son-in-law; at present, however, she was obliged

per was on his way, in

metropolis.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHASE CONTINUED.

Well, then, there's my hand.

THE BROTHERS.

SIR JASPER on his arrival in town lost no time in presenting himself at Lady Shelwood's; bustling along on his course like a typhoon, big with the determined explosion of his fury when he should arrive in presence of the guilty parties. He was shown into the drawing-room, where he sat with no great patience until Lady S. made

see you.

"Turned out so wel

Don't talk of dear Alice

she not done enough to

to me, as long as she li

think you can sport so

Shelwood."

"My dear Sir Jasper

sibly have heard ——"

"I've heard too much.

"You cannot possibly

"Oh, I've received a g

bargained for."

"What?—is it possible

"Ay, ay; everything

duces to one's plague and

to you, Lady Shelwood, for harbouring an undutiful, runaway daughter."

"What! won't you forgive her after hearing the joyful news that the last post conveyed to you?"

"What last post? I left Cheltenham yesterday morning."

"Gracious! then the letter must have arrived just in time for you to escape it;—just after you went away!"

"What letter?—what do you signify by joyful news? You may call it so, if you please; but by all appearances —— "

"It is plain to me," continued Lady S., following up his words, "that your daughter could not have been better united than she has been!—Why Melmont has recovered all the property he was entitled to. He is a rich man! He and your daughter have taken a handsome house, where

scold me and repudiate

Lady S. could not fo

astonishment—ludicrou

the rubicund face of th

a little time, recovered h

his wrath with a sort o

drew breath more freely;

recover himself, Lady S

him with stories of his

tresses, and the generous

with from some of his fo

friends, especially the L

whose spirit was as barren

"Why didn't the dog l

out Sir Jasper.

"What had h

already?" said Lady S., laughing. "Alice was a richer loan than any ——"

"Loan; no, no!" said Sir J., "the rogue did not borrow her—he took her,—feloniously took her!—but I forgive him, (since it seems 'appearances' are so well kept up,) and give my consent heartily to the marriage!"

These words were scarcely out of Sir Jasper's mouth, when the folding doors of the back drawing-room flew open, and forward came our hero, hand-in-hand with Alice; the latter ran into the arms of her father, who could not forbear blubbering over his child, for his heart was full at the sight of a daughter he had ever loved so tenderly; and while he hugged her to his breast with one arm, he held out his other for Melmont to take his hand, which our hero did with all due warmth of filial affection, and with no less reverence put it

cheese which our hero
affecting scene being ov
away, with the back of
that had involuntarily st
cheeks and jowls like d
hero to tell the whole
fortunes, which he accor
ling all praise, and asto
his worthy father-in-law
account of his having re
to have been lost, whom
see. Nor was it many mo
went out and led her into
boudoir leading out of th
where she had been. T

"heart" (for a better hearted being never existed), was for folding her in his arms and imprinting, *suo more*, a "smacking kiss" on her cheek; but he was somewhat awed and repressed by the extreme majesty and the delicate sorrow of her aspect; and it was not till Melmont said, "Come, Sir Jasper, give my sister your blessing," and led her up to him, that the old man took courage, and said, "He hoped God might bless her, with all his heart!" And here the impulse of affection went full gallop like a coach running down hill,—and the baronet imprinted a "smack" with his lips on her "pure pale cheek;" which, however rude it might have appeared, was worth all the ceremony in the world! After this introduction he was all anxiety to see and reward Starling, vowing he never should want for anything! Melmont told him he had already taken care that

Starling should be well provided for, and should feel hurt that any one but himself should have that pleasure. As for La Marre, Sir Jasper could not endure the thought of his son-in-law's forbearance in not prosecuting him for forgery of the will (as well as for swindling) through the testimony of Starling, and he vowed that it was but a duty to the public to do so. "I shall speak to Starling about this, be assured," he continued; "meantime, I wish Lady Lentworth had been here to witness this happy change of circumstances."

"The letter, Sir Jasper," said Melmont, "has conveyed ——"

"Oh, ay, the letter that it appears arrived just after I had set off!—Ah, you rogues (looking at Alice and our hero), you have much to thank her for! She was all patience, kindness, and confidence in an ultimately

fortunate result.—Down on your knees, and thank her!"

"We do indeed!" said both of them—Alice wiping away an involuntary tear.

"Ay, a pretty dance I had after you, runagates!"

And so the good old baronet gave a merry recital of his chase to Bath—of the invalid that he caught after his trouble—of his gout—his fury and arrival in town. And thus ended this happy rencontre; Sir J. saying, that having seen everything so much to his wishes, he should lose no time in going back to Cheltenham, to give Lady L. a detail of all the circumstances, Alice and our hero promising to accompany him. Meantime, the house Melmont had taken, or Lady Shelwood's, could be occupied by his sister, whose companion Lady S. would constantly be. All this being settled, and Mel-

mont promising his sister he would not be long before he returned, was about to take his departure with his bride and Sir Jasper; but some business suddenly preventing his being ready, he begged of Sir J. to pursue his journey, and take Alice with him, and that he would follow him the next day; as for Sir Jasper—his impatience to see Lady L. and tell her "all that there was to tell," was so great, that he could brook no delay in setting off, though Alice would rather have waited, in order that Melmont might be of the party.

CHAPTER VI.

ORATOR CLUMP AND ORATOR MELMONT.

They blame or praise, but as one leads the other:
Unthinking souls! that when consider'd singly,
How few we find deserve the name of men;
Yet in conjunction grow they formidable.

FROWDE'S "FALL OF SAGUNTUM."

THE business that had delayed Melmont having been despatched, he was anxious to hurry on the trace of Alice and Sir Jasper, and, therefore, took his departure from town back to Cheltenham, through Oxford, by one

of the public conveyances, as the most easy and expeditious mode of getting over the ground. Time and space, which once afforded ideas so sublime, alas! how degraded now is their majesty, when a stage-coach at the rate of ten miles an hour, or a steam carriage at the rate of three times ten miles in the same period, mocks them,—almost sets them, and their obstacles to the movements of us fidgety little pigmies on earth's surface, at nought! Melmont had scarcely been seated a moment on the box, when he felt some one tapping him on the shoulder, and on turning round, perceived a huge bacon-faced individual, in the shape of a farmer, staring and grinning in his face, whom he recognised as one of the "independent electors of the Borough of ———," which he yet hoped to represent. This man was in his interest, and Melmont, of course, exhibited

himself as pleased to meet the honest booby, as the bumpkin himself was to fall in with Mr. Melmont. Our hero seized the farmer's brawny fist, and gave it such a shake that Mr. Clump had no doubt of the friendliness of the gentleman he addressed,—of the vigour of whose good-will he was convinced, by being pretty nearly swung off the coach by the salutation. Melmont understood his cue with an "honest plain man,"—an "independent elector,"—a "stout-hearted freeborn Englishman."

"Why, Mr. Melmont! how do you do, Sir?" said the farmer. "Well! I'm very glad to see you, Sir; I hope you're well!"

"Pretty well, I thank you, Mr. Clump; how are all my friends down at ——? though you, all of you, used me sadly ill, in not returning me, last election. I wish you all well—your staunch friend still."

"It was not our fault, Sir; upon my life it wasn't! Many of the electors were tenants under the other interest. But it won't do—no, no, it won't do the next time; tenants, or no tenants, we'll have the man of our choice—hang'd if we don't!" added the honest and zealous Clump, thumping the coach top, to the no small alarm of a nervous old gentleman in the inside, who thought a thunderbolt at least was making invasion through the roof of the vehicle.

"And who is the man of your choice?" asked Melmont, with somewhat of reproof in his tone, by way of awakening compunction in the bosom of Clump, for having thrown him out on a former occasion of his standing for the borough.

"Why, who should it be but yourself, Mr. Melmont?" replied the generous Clump—

"did'n't you say we were to have the quartern loaf down at fourpence?—yes, you did!"

Melmont could not help laughing at the innocence of the honest farmer, in supposing that he could have ever said this (if he ever did) so seriously as was understood; however, it was a mistake—Melmont had never said so; no matter, Clump quite warmed into oratory, in his zeal to support our hero, and make him amends for his former discomfiture, or ill success rather. Clump continued in this vein, much to our hero's amusement.

"Didn't you say, as how it was a d—d shame——"

"I never swore, Mr. Clump; if you'll have the goodness to recollect, I said it was an intolerable shame—but you're quite right in the substance of what you say."

"Well, Sir, I ask your pardon—but didn't

you say, it was an in—intol—intol—deroddle shame on the character of the nation, that men hadn't a fowl, each of them in their pots?—ay, and a guinea in their pockets?—ay, the honest earnings of their labour? ay—didn't you, now?" added Clump, quite out of breath from his energy, and puffing like a mill-horse—"didn't you, I ask? why—yes! you did!" Another thump of the fist on the coach top, (to the renewed alarm of the poor old gentleman inside,) elegantly wound up this splendid burst of Clump's eloquence, and fully echoed back to the man the idea of his own political importance.

"To be sure I did! and will say it again," cried Melmont, in reply, following up, with a generously assumed sympathy, the political bravado-rant of the enthusiastic clodhopper. To give his sympathy greater effect, he rang a peal with his fist, *à la Clump*, on the seat by

his side. Clump thought him, doubtless, a most animated orator. Melmont, on his part, trusted that, if he could take Clump's feeling in his favour as an example of that of the other electors,—a little rant, and a little thumping, the next time he met them, would perhaps secure his return! At present, however, he had enough to do to restrain his impatience, on listening to the crude notions of political regeneration uttered by the honest farmer, which he took an opportunity (being almost tired even of laughing at them within himself) of putting an end to, by getting in a word of his own; in doing which he hoped to impress the farmer still more with the importance of promoting his interest in the borough, by trumpeting his praises amongst his brother electors.

"I am glad to see," said Melmont, with due gravity, "that what I said for the good of

the electors of ———, and my country also, has been kindly remembered by any one of my friends to whom I addressed myself on that occasion. I certainly trust they will not forget to support me better when I shall next offer myself. I shall, for the informing them of what I consider for their good, publish a letter, addressed to my constituents, and come down afterwards and address them again on the subject. Perhaps I shall take the opportunity of meeting my friends—at a dinner."

"Yes, yes, Sir—a dinner," interposed Clump, feeling that our hero had touched (perhaps not inadvertently) on the most powerful argument, after all, which he could use in recommending himself—backed, of course, by his numerous high qualifications: but this argument was the true, genuine, real, convincing *argumentum ad hominem*, as Sir Jasper Lentworth maintains; for it

was the *argumentum ad ventrem;* and too true is it, according to the worthy Baronet, that, in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred, the "stomach is the god" of frail and sensual mortals! A plea to the heart, or the understanding, is weak in comparison with a plea *ad ventrem!*—with this the man sympathiseth truly—at least our friend Clump (this fine specimen of the electors of ——) certainly did so! We do not wish to joke in saying this,—since we believe it, with Sir Jasper, (in our first volume) to be true; and no less serious do we wish to be, in saying that our hero did right in taking, perhaps, his old friend's advice, in looking forward to making a dinner the scene of giving expression to his sentiments. It is an occasion, in the first place, that conciliates people at once; — eating and drinking is, apparently, the easy, harmless, familiar, and nourishing object;—a veil is thrown

over "politics,"—and, of course, over any little differences as well,—if such there should be in the breasts of any; and the person who would go to a convivial meeting of the kind, with a view to throw the torch of Discord amidst it, rather than to catch a spark from the torch of Friendship, is a churl—a disagreeable Scythian not to be envied!—*tollite barbarum morem!* In these times of discord, it is a blessed thing to meet together at any scene that has harmony as its character, and as an intrinsic ingredient in its composition. What season is there that is not, on this account, signalised by feasting? Every occasion is made an excuse for this innocent pastime! Is it Michaelmas?—a goose must suffer. Is it Christmas?—a turkey has not much more cause to boast his indemnity from being spitted. Is it—is it—in fact, when is it not, that every season furnishes a worthy excuse for a savoury

celebration? All we say is—may it ever continue to do so! We are "stickers up" for the good old times; and we wish the pictures of prosperity, rural happiness, honest industry, that they present, may live again, to the blessing of the poorest of the unemployed and pauper multitudes the country now has too much reason to lament over. So thought Melmont; but as to what more he said to Clump, it is scarcely worth our while here to detail. Suffice it to say he gave his embryo constituent's weak mind splendid and astounding ideas of the social and political regeneration he—"he himself, he"—was to effect, when he should be duly elected the representative of ——. Whatever he said, of course he enforced with the suitable energy of action we have already shown to have such potent effect on his worthy travelling companion; in fact, he out-harangued and out-

thumped the political farmer, who, when he took leave of our hero at the end of the day's journey (that is, at Oxford), stared at him as a miracle of enterprise, eloquence, and greatness! —nothing short of an Atlas, on which the support of the country rested! With such impressions did Clump take leave of Melmont; and having thus magnificently figured before his clodpole friend, Melmont bent his way to the Star Hotel, in Oxford, trusting, again and again, that what he had addressed to Clump was, in fact, addressed to his brother electors as well; for he doubted not that the transported and admiring farmer would trumpet the wonders he declared he should work for them, would they but consult their interests in duly "returning" him, when the fit time should arrive.

CHAPTER VII.

A KINDRED GENIUS—SOMEWHAT SO.

——— A merrier man,
Within the limit of becoming mirth,
I never spent an hour's talk withal.

LOVE'S LABOUR LOST.

Nous sommes anciens amis,—c'est permis, entre nous, "tutoyer."

VAUDEVILLE, *par Scribe.*

MELMONT was set down, at Oxford, at the "Star;" when in the coffee-room whom should he meet but his old college friend (a happier one than poor Harvey!) and boon companion,

Raverton, or Jack Raverton, as he used more commonly to be called. Jack was of a genius in a certain degree kindred with that of our hero, which, doubtless, (without the authority of Guizot, and his doctrine of sympathies,) was the cause of their friendship. Jack was, however, of a more volatile and restless disposition than even our hero, who eclipsed him, when it came to the "point," in the higher essentials of what is termed "character."

"My dear Jack!" cried Melmont (really, —and not feignedly, glad to see his old friend), "I am delighted to see you."

"Melmont!.....there's no hand I am so happy to shake as Melmont's," said Raverton, as he squeezed his friend's hand; and continued, in his way—"I'm so glad to meet you after so long a time, for it appears so,—though, in truth, it is not so very long a time, either——".

"No—one does not like to feel oneself growing older," interrupted Melmont, smiling.

"Tell me, thou best of fellows!" continued Raverton, "how thou dost? whence thou comest? whither thou goest? and, lastly, how thou hast spent thy time since we took leave of *Alma Mater?* and, 'to conclude,' (as saith Dogberry,) all that it may interest me to know of thy history since we parted. I long to be informed!"

"To answer all thy interrogatories would be impossible, for some little time; unless, indeed, the despatch of steam could avail me here, which I fear it cannot. In the first place, I shall parry thy interrogatories by a very important one to both of us—*videlicet*, hast thou yet dined?"

"Bravo!" replied Jack; "that have I not; and if I had, it should go hard with me but I

would summon up another appetite to banquet with thee!"

"We dine together, then," was the brief reply—and as quickly the bell was rung, and dinner ordered.

The friends quickly found that the pursuits of either party, since quitting college, had been equally desultory;—they had both travelled abroad a good deal—both having, for the facilitation of their restless propensities, been sufficiently independent of the buffets and inconveniences of Fortune. Raverton lived on an estate which had come to him from an uncle, though originally he had been intended for the law. Of this Melmont reminded him, adding—

"Why, thou wert about as fit for the steady path of law, as thy good grandmother of seventy-three was fit to dance the tight-rope, and little more so!"

"Little more so, in truth! I will not gainsay thee; and on this consideration I resolved sagely on doing that which the proudest schemes of the greatest minds often end in—nothing! If there had been a war, I should have gone as a volunteer, perhaps; but to have subjected myself to the trammels of a 'commission,' and 'military discipline,' would not have been precisely my taste; so I volunteered to do—nothing!"

"*Proh pudor!*" ejaculated Melmont, while his lively friend continued with the following exhibition of his humourous character.

"Matrimony I coquetted with for some little time; but dreading that a lad of such a free and independent disposition should be shackled by any fetters, domestic or other, I remained single, and do not at all wish to be doubled in the folds of matrimony!"

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"Say you so! Be as
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women; but none of thei
have left these inestimab
joyed by others more l
myself. Noble disinteres
nay, magnanimity!"

"Truly, Jack, thou we

but to make those merry about thee, and amuse thyself with thy own manifold conceits. Thou'rt incorrigible! utterly, an idler in the sunshine of life! Society will never have its dividend of service out of thee, which thou dost owe it. Hang thee! art thou not ashamed of being a 'drone' in the hive, and doing nothing?"

"Nay," replied Jack, ironically, "drone as I am in the hive of society, I serve to do some good! for though only a consumer of the honey —yet, since I pay for it, I assist the interests of my country in assisting its trade, to a certain extent! So far, I do some good; and if you accuse me of living to amuse myself, and make those merry about me—why, have I not claims on the gratitude of society for promoting happiness in my petty sphere?—the greatest good, as philosophers say, (have said, and ever will say,) we can do! How many are there, who are

contagion about them,
vapours, dumps, dolde
wherever they move, or

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—who tell one their own v
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are cheap, but that the
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Or, again, take the insta
certain Mr. Fleming, whos

subject, by-the-by, which is the hobby of this gentleman)—but why good?—not because it was good in itself; but because it was less bad, acid, and mischievous than lighter wines—French or Rhenish! So, thou claimest merit for thyself, not for bearing any active part in promoting the interests of thy fellow-men, but for thy very idleness, inasmuch, truly, as thou art a most mercurial and exquisite idler, and not the dull and absolute automaton which Idleness delights to marshal in her train, touching them with her leaden wand. Ah, varlet! I have thee on the hip! I have shown thee one of those fallacies I delight in exposing!"

"Nay, but thou provokest me, thou best of fellows, in not perceiving that it is my misfortune, and not my fault, that I am not fitted by nature or by my genius for any steady occupation! Alas! I lament it as much as thy philoso-

no small matter, I r
happy about him. I a
monotonous humdrum
dozing and dancing th
with my hat slouch
breakfast to dinner, 'li
says, instead of 'eatin
live.' Pshaw! the 'f
of soul' is the study
parts,—'*nunquam mi*
otiosus,' is my motto; a
opinion of me," continue
fully to give me credit,
which at least, I may be
"Nay, Jack, I will

why thou shouldst shake off thy garb of indolence! Thou dost convict thyself. I will flatter thee and applaud thee when thou art a reclaimed subject—active, where thou wert indolent — steady, where thou wert unsettled, rambling, and unsteady — a very 'will-o'-the-whisp'——"

"Flitting along the dull and drear path of life, to enliven the fogs, vapours, — yes, and melancholy of its atmosphere," interrupted Jack, "I am, indeed, irreclaimable—incorrigible! . . . I rejoice in my unsteady disposition, which is very happiness to me, and does harm to nobody."

"Not to thyself?"

"No; but good—*au contraire*; for without it I should have learned nothing! Now, impelling me as it has, to ramble about the world, I have observed much, and gleaned something——"

the world as a great bc
and new nation I mee
unclose and scrutinise
intentions,' believe me,
with a great appetite f

"Dinner, I trust,"
as the waiter now app
cloth, and marshal th
table. In a short tin
seated opposite each otl
cussion of the dishes
scarcely less interestin
of reason that they ha
themselves withal.

CHAPTER VIII.

JACK RAVERTON'S ROMANCE—MALVINA.

Ay, I would travel twice the distance o'er,
Encounter twice the peril of the way,
To catch a glimpse of her again—but *one!*
A moment were a world of bliss to *me!*

OLD PLAY.

MELMONT had the satisfaction of finding that his friend was bound, like himself, for Cheltenham; so they agreed to continue their journey thither together the next morning. In obedience

macy: giving him, in a
"wonderful life and adve
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Raverton: when Melmo
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gotten Horace's rule in storytelling; so let me beg of thee not to tantalise me by rambling about in thy path as a firefly over a banyan grove, or a butterfly over a meadow, for I am impatient to hear the pith, and penetrate to the marrow of thy history."

"Nay, I must tell things in my own way, to tell them at all."

"As thou wilt, then: if thy excursiveness be, however, as amusing as it was wont, I shall like it as well as the substance of thy history; once again, then, let me ask thee, whither thou hast been twirling, since we last parted? thou teetotum of a fellow, declare!"

"Teetotum, indeed, thou mayest say! and twirling in no narrow orbit of fidget! but spreading wide through the scope of my vagaries! a very football in the gambols of fortune have I been sent whisking about

the world, since we last drank a cup—'*Bono Genio!*' Ah! what merry tykes were we, '*consule Planco*,' which, being interpreted, means, in the proctorate of 'Brummagem Ned,' as we used to call him—and wofully teazed we that little dignitary."

"But thy history—thy history—thou runnest from the point—wild as thou wert used to be!"

"My history I'll come to in an instant—but a passing tribute must be paid to *auld lang syne!* Ah! those dear '*noctes cœnæque!*' the spirit that glowed through their festivity is for ever at an end! We are comparatively old to what we were at those merry *symposia*—worthy of the board of Plato!"

"Vastly Platonic, indeed," interrupted Melmont.

"Red hot were we then, too, from the forge of dear Aristophanes!—*lucida sidera* did

we shine in the classic heaven, worthy disciples of the school of Alcibiades (if not of Plato)—and, *proh pudor!*—of Aspasia * too!"

"Fie on thee—none of this badinage;—we were boys then; talk not of Aspasia now."

"What! hast thou none of thy ancient fire within thee? Then, as Pistol says, thou'rt but a base Bezonian to what thou wert! and a figstalk for thee—much less a fig! But thou'rt not the cold clay thou wouldst have me think thee, but still warmed by the true Promethean spark thou wert always touched with! Come! *deprome quadrimum Sabinâ, O Thaliarche, merum diotâ*," continued Jack, ringing the bell, and ordering the waiter to bring another bottle of champagne. "Now then, I'll pledge thee,—on

* The *chere amie* of Pericles, celebrated by Aristophanes. This lady was of Ionian extraction, and as talented as she was luxurious: she used to help Pericles in composing his speeches.

proceeding, at length, to give thee my adventures; but first, here's a cup to 'auld lang syne;'" saying which, he drank the contents of the sparkling glass he held in his hand.

"Now then, for thy romance," said Melmont.

"From what point shall I start?" said Jack; "*qua deinde incipiam?* as the poet hath it. Well, I will not delay. You may imagine, then, with my restless propensities, it was not exactly agreeable, after I had attained my majority, and had become master of myself, to be bound, by duty, to sit by the arm-chair or by the bedside of a rheumatic old uncle, talking or reading to him, as he best felt inclined. He pestered me sadly, good man, for three mortal months after my attainment of 'one-and-twenty,' and very tiresome and whimsical did I then pronounce him to myself. After the above-named period,

however, the poor man died, and I then found out that he was a man of many virtues, and of a decidedly superior mind !.... (*His saltem accumulem donis*, &c.) He had, by-the-by, left me in possession of all his property in the funds, and all, too, that he had in the West Indies (where he had an estate), which all was just nothing,—I speak of the West India property. The elements having one fine afternoon taken it into their rackety heads to be boisterous, paid the estate a visit, "got drunk" on the rum (I suppose), and danced a fandango amongst the sugar-canes, called a 'hurricane!' The estate went to destruction, and I sold the property for whatever I could get, glad to rid myself of it: what little, indeed, I managed to get by this sale, I considered *autant de gagné*, since property of that nature, and a 'losing interest,' are synonymous terms! Well, on the death of my uncle, I set

off on my rambles the more eagerly on account of my late restraint. My desire for roving being not a little extensive, I at first determined to run over, at least, three parts of the globe; however, on second thoughts, I so far moderated my ardour, that I curtailed the extent of my perigrinations to the limits of a transalpine expedition. A journey to Italy was the happy medium I resolved upon for indemnifying myself, on the one hand, for my late confinement and restriction from liberty, and as a limit, on the other hand, to my rather too ardent desire of wandering over the world—my determination being, as it were, a 'precipitate' (to use the language of chemistry) between the two extremes. To Paris, as my first stage, I went quicker even than if transported by steam—(always excepting the passage from Dover to Calais—which I *did* go by steam)—

quicker than if borne in Mons. Blanchard's or Green's air-balloon, or any thing, in fact, short of thought, lightning, or shot—namely, on the wings of—Love, to be sure! . . . If any one could have arrested my volatility of disposition, and held me in the matrimonial fetter, it would have been Eleanor—it was she whom I now hastened to see. You know, when at college, we used in rotation to toast the maid we severally admired—Eleanor was always my toast——"

"I remember it well! Could you really have been constant to her so long as your account shows you to have been?"

"Constant! I am as fit a pattern of constancy——"

"As you are of a prime minister or a lord chancellor, or a . . . ."

". . . . At least I could rival some who have filled those capacities, in exemption from the qualities of inconsistency, or duplicity. But to

continue my adventures. On arriving at Paris, what was my disappointment when I found that Eleanor had just left it with her family for Geneva; accordingly, after a much shorter time than I should otherwise have stayed at this most charming of kill-time places, I hied off to Geneva on the track of the fair mistress of my heart. When I arrived there I was provoked with Fortune more and more; nay, in my impatience I was even provoked with the lovely object of my affections herself."

"I am not surprised," interrupted Melmont, laughing.

"How could I be otherwise? The dear girl had run away from me again. It turned out that I had been misinformed: the family had gone to Florence, and not Geneva. To Florence I accordingly determined on bending my steps, or rather my wings, for I whirled along on my route so expeditiously, I may rather be said to

have flown than proceeded in any other way. Before, however, I crossed the Alps, there was so much of loveliness in the region in which I was, that I was held to the spot; and when I accused myself of not immediately following the track of my fugitive mistress, I consoled myself with the reflection that I might perhaps as well stay where I was, as hurry on to encounter the chance, perhaps, of another disappointment—for disappointments generally do not come single, but in train. During my delay in this neighbourhood, I amused myself by turning geologist, among other things, and broke more stones, and more frequently, than I had formerly broken Priscian's head at college; when one day, being a little too precipitate in my 'researches concerning' a bed of 'flœtz,' or 'trap and quartz,'—or some such sage inquiry,—I precipitated myself further than I intended, and

had the pleasure (or displeasure) of finding myself in a horizontal or rather oblique position, swinging by the waistband of my galligaskins on the stump of a pine tree, which obligingly stuck its arm out to arrest my fall from descending to the remainder of the precipice, which I saw thirty feet below me. I had already 'gone down stairs' to the depth of about fifteen feet and more, though I had made but one step from the top to the bottom. With some difficulty two chamois hunters forked me up again with a long pole they had with a hook at the end, to assist them in leaping and clinging to the sides of the mountains. Just as they had got me to the top, they ——"

"Let you drop again, I suppose," said Melmont, laughing.

"Not exactly, but very near it! and so, in the effort to secure me, one of them rammed his

hook so deep into my ribs, that he fished me to shore much in the condition of a harpooned grampus: I floundered on the bank as you may —(how unfeeling it is of you to laugh so!) — as you may suppose, for some time,—not very well, after this bleeding, which was indeed a little more than I liked."

"Indeed," said Melmont, "you may say of your chamois hunter, that he saved you by hook or by crook!"

"I think so," answered Raverton, laughing. Well, being faint from this phlebotomy, I was conveyed to the nearest chateau: it happened to belong to Madame B., the most lovely brunette, I should observe, I ever set eyes on. This charming creature did all for me that the kindest interest and most delicate attention could afford me in my disabled state; my arm, by the by, as well as my rib, had been handsomely tattooed

—— B., I confess
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grew so partial to ea
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take my leave of her;
so obligingly willing t
stay, that I took up m
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to be in such delightfu

"Delightful! I hav
mont, smiling. "Cha
B.! How long did you
spell of this Calypso las

"Her husband, a d
quence in the employ
ment, returned from his

was thus broken, and I took my leave at length, though with reluctance, of Madame B. She was in truth a charming and amiable being."

"And her husband?" inquired Melmont.

"*Tout au contraire*," continued Jack; "he was a very incubus in appearance, and reminded me more of one of Fuseli's devils than any face I ever set eyes on."

"Such is the universal law of contradiction,' said Melmont; "the wife was charming, and of course it was her lot to be linked with a person as little so as need be, or need not be, rather. Come, here's a glass to the health of Madame B., by way of humouring thy regard for her!"

"With all my heart," said Raverton, eagerly filling his glass, and conveying it to his lips.

"Thy romance is delightful, Jack! The sun of Madame B.'s eyes kept thee warm, despite all the icebergs that froze around thee!"

[illegible] was now healed
travels, despite the w
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forgotten I presume."

"Of Eleanor?—No
but still, though she wa
remembered, I confess, a
as herself. How could it
demanded this of me to I
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her name!"

"She had a little ne

leading you a wild-goose chase, and leaving you in the lurch without permitting you to reach her?"

"Perhaps so; and I was also a little indebted to her fair self for the somerset I made down the precipice, for though I was geologising confessedly at the time, I was, at the moment of my tumble, wandering on the thought of her—and got nearly killed for my pains—a charming reward for my devotion, which, I think, demanded but little gratitude on my part!"

"I don't wonder at these *contretemps* rather impeding the pleasure that should otherwise have attached undisturbedly to the thought of her; I acquit thee of unfaithfulness to her, albeit thou didst feel thyself drawn from her towards Madame B; nay, more—I will say for thee, that, if thou hadst not conceived the interest for Madame B. which thou didst, I should imagine that thou hadst been metamorphosed

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elsewhere—of which an

ing that Eleanor had long been a 'flame' of mine, and an ancient toast, I thought I had been a little neglected in her taking a foreigner as her husband, when she knew I was in pursuit of her—yes, I was indignant—a very volcano as thou sayest—I flung any letters I had of hers into the fire, tore all the sonnets I had scrawled for her and her album, and penned a tremendous Pindaric denouncing her ingratitude and perfidy with respect to myself, giving the whole sex, into the bargain, the benefit of a warning on this delicate subject. After this ebullition of passion, I was much relieved, sung half through the Italiana in Algieri, which was running in my head at the time, flung my cloak over my shoulder, sauntered to a *café*—and verily believe have scarcely bestowed a thought on Eleanor since!"

"She knew, be assured, that you were

"At Florence;—
time after my leavi
now to be filled up
which still remains
first."

"I am all attenti
in case this reminisc
has a little ruffled
before you continue,
request being compli
on the part of "Jack,

"I proceeded acro
Chamberî, where I d
the genius of Rousse
about him), and then

more, a horrid thunder-storm—vastly sublime (and no less detestable in these mountains), together with hail-stones as big as rifle bullets, came on; this was in the descent of the mountain. A party, a little on before us, had just had an overthrow, so slippery was the road: as this party consisted of ladies chiefly, and our own of gentlemen, we gave up our carriage to them to preserve them from the "pelting of the pitiless storm," while we did our best in assisting to set the overturned vehicle on its legs (or wheels) again, and also in repairing, if possible, a huge hole knocked in the top, which would have converted the equipage into a rain-tub more than anything else. When I say that we did all this, I beg to give the greater portion of the merit of these exertions to my companions in the journey, wisely calling to mind the saying, that too many cooks spoil th

so with this reflection I betook me for refuge from the hail and rain, to a sort of cave by the road side—a grotto rather of ice it was,—and would have made a very nice little boudoir for the genius of Winter to sit and sulk in—his nose and chin dripping with icicles."

"Away with thy ridiculous originalities, and say what took place in the cave."

"Well, when I entered it, whom should I find but one of the ladies of the other party, who had taken refuge there with an elderly gentleman, who was doubtless the patriarch of the set—the father of the family. This rencontre with one so lovely was quite sufficient to indemnify me for the annoyance of the delay on the mountain, and the ducking from the rain; so, trusting my companions would be as long as possible in their laudable occupation of setting to right the damaged vehicle, I entered into

conversation with my new Dulcinea, and her most respected and respectable papa."

"A happy rencontre, indeed," remarked Melmont, "and truly romantic—you may remember Eneas's falling in with Dido, much in the same circumstances.

> 'Speluncam Dido dux et Trojanus eandem
> Deveniunt. . . . . .'"

Raverton smiled at the classic reminiscence, and proceeded.

"I found my beauty as lovely in mind as in person; I found too she was a Florentine. She was on her way with the rest of her party to the very spot whither I was myself bound—'fair Florence!' They were, however, going by the short route from Turin by way of Placenza; my plans were to lead me round by Pisa, first to Genoa, and then skirting round

the bay of Spezzia, to Pisa, and so to Florence. If I had not been most anxious to go this lovely route (which it would have been a sin to miss), nothing should have turned me aside from going the same track as her who now held my heart."

"Madame B., too, forgotten! already! as quickly as Eleanor had been! . . . . Why thou very Turk!—with thy plurality of inamoratas! Hang thee, thou would'st be indicted—not for bigamy, but trigamy and polygamy—wert thou to betake thee to matrimony! One wife would never satisfy thee! Thou wouldst be a second Harry the Eighth couldst thou obtain a dispensation! . . . Well, on with thee, to Turin."

Raverton continued, laughing: "I had the satisfaction of going so far as Turin, on the same route as my lovely Florentine: her name

I had by this time learned, was Malvina: the rest of the party with her were Bolognese—cousins of hers: the old man, I found, was her grandfather, as I had imagined; with him I learned she chiefly lived, her father being almost as wild and unsettled a being, by all account, as myself—a certain Count Lanzi . . . "

"What! brother to the Count Vasari?"

"The same! do you know him?"

"I have heard of Lanzi, and doubt not the daughter was more worthy esteem and affection than her father.—But don't let me interrupt your story."

"You may suppose, then, I saw Malvina part on the road to Placenza with bitterness; and I determined to lose no time in joining her again; though, as to her father's family, I never could elicit much from her: she seemed to be, in fact, entirely dependent on her grand-

father; these cousins, I found, were connected to her not by her father's, but her mother's side—her mother, by the by, had died in her infancy."

"What were Malvina's features?"

"Her complexion was most lovely pale; her hair dark; and such heavenly eyes! deep lustrous black, with long jetty eyelashes; a forehead polished as ivory: the contour of her face delicacy itself,—all softness:—'too fair to worship, too divine to love,'—says the author of the Apollo Belvidere; however, I found this beauty fair enough to persuade me to love and worship both. I will not take you through all the stages of my route—delightful as they were—and as you know,—having gone through these scenes oftener, perhaps, than I have; I shall, therefore, transport you at once to the termination of my present ramble at Florence."

"Did you find Malvina?"

"I inquired for her father's house,—it appeared her father had no residence there. I went accordingly to her uncle's, the Count Vasari's; I had heard her speak of her aunt, the countess, with great affection. Both the one and the other were absent from Florence, but I here gained intelligence of Malvina's being at Bologna with her grandfather, who was very ill, and scarcely expected to live. To Bologna I flew. Her aged relative was dead; Malvina was in mourning; I put on mourning too, to show my respect, love, and sympathy for her. It was more for her, indeed, than her grandfather, that I might consider myself in mourning; for she was virtually lost to me, as she was unable to appear out, or do otherwise at present than sit in 'the shadow of death,' as the Scripture says. However, she was pleased to see me—(I was amply compensated for the lo

Eleanor!)—and I ventured to express my regret at being deprived of the happiness of her company, for which I had looked so anxiously. I believe she was sensible of my attachment; and when I suggested a hope that I might find her on my return to Bologna or Florence, she expressed her sense of my attention, and said, that if she did not happen to be at either of these places she should most likely be absent with her aunt, the Countess Vasari, who, she said, often resided at some distance in the vicinity of Genoa."

"So you took leave of her quite happy in thinking you had secured her affections. Don't you see, in doing so,—that your route, wherever it was bent, was certainly leading you towards the goal of matrimony—against reaching which you some little time ago expressed such reluctance? How's this? Resolve me the riddle here of your inconsistency."

"I always like making the best of the condition I happen to be in at the present moment; hence it is, that I console myself for being single by dispraising matrimony and its sober restrictions,—but I hesitate not to say, that if I were married I should assuredly endeavour to persuade myself that I was happiest off in that condition!"

"Well, this is a very reasonable philosophy, to endeavour to be pleased with one's condition, whatever it may be; as it is, however, I should say that at the present moment you certainly contemplate single blessedness as likely to be your choice."

"Alas! I have lost sight of the object of my affections! . . . . How do I know she thinks of me? . . . . But let me continue with my adventures. I took my leave of Malvina, and went to Milan; and after this, proceeded along the

Adriatic (having made some little stay at Venice in my way), and then crossed the Apennines by the Forlo, on my way to Rome. I waited a few days at Terni, on the road to Perugia, to enjoy the beauty of the cascade scenery, and soon reached the Eternal City—there I suffered a sad blow."

"What," said Melmont, laughing, "from a tumble-down brick-bat in the ruins of the Coliseum? Ay! you may easily get your head broken, and shins too, if you are too venturous in exploring there?"

"No, this shock relates not to any suffering on the part of either my shins or my head, but —my heart!"

"Capital! Thy heart, rogue!"

"Nay, in truth ——"

"My handkerchief is already half way up to my eyes."

"Raise it then up entirely; think what a struggle of feeling I must have endured (if you give me credit for being capable of feeling at all) on the one hand, of passion for Malvina, and on the other, of remorse for having so soon permitted this passion to obliterate,—or at least deaden the warmth of my affection for my dear Madame B., of whose death the news now reached me. I was much distressed; I was startled at its suddenness."

"Indeed you must have felt this, and I am really serious when I say so. Let me ask you, equally seriously, how long it was before you a little came to yourself again?"

"Of course to Madame B. I could not consider myself as having been more than a 'friend,' —nevertheless I could not help loving her, and sufficiently to reproach myself as I have just mentioned. If it appears that I felt too

strongly towards her, it is an error on the right side, and more venial than if I had been incapable of feeling sufficiently her great kindness and attention to me, as I have before mentioned. It was some little time before I came to myself; and I'll tell you what now brought me round, in no very agreeable way either. Selfish men, the worldly-minded and sordid (with which the world is so plentifully stocked now-a-days), would say that this next blow was worse than the last! I did not say so, though it was indeed inconvenient—it was—that my banker had "broke!" and I had a prospect of being considerably hampered and harassed. In the first place I was considering whether it would not be expedient for me to hurry back to England immediately. This was the last thing my inclinations prompted me to do. Then how was I to stay where I was, conveniently, at such

a distance from home? My letters of credit had already been used to their utmost amount, as I was not particularly economical, and how to get others at the present time I knew not. Most people would have rattled back home, hurry-skurry—helter-skelter—as if the 'devil drove!' This was not my plan: I determined to do anything rather than submit to such an annoyance and curtailment of my stay abroad;—I determined to borrow of a friend;—or, if I failed in this manœuvre, to turn teacher of guitar and singing—for I could play an arpeggio or two; and as for voice—you know what a splendid volume I had of voice in bellowing forth a Bacchanalian at a college wine party. However, I was spared either of these contingencies; for, having called on the Countess R——, a Neapolitan lady of my acquaintance, and making known to her my difficulties, she obligingly gave me the 'place,'

pro tem., of her cavaliere servente; so there was honour for me, and advantage combined! as good as a situation under government. She was residing at the time at Rome, though Naples was her place of abode. I ought to say, that when I called her countess I was not giving her her full title of distinction,—she was nothing short of a principessa, and I need say nothing of her husband's official station at Naples, as you know all about him, and more, perhaps, than myself. During the time I took up my quarters with her excellency, I improved her amazingly in 'her parts of speech,' as Mrs. Malaprop says, and taught her to get rid, to some extent, of her vile Neapolitan patois. It is quite astonishing to hear the ladies of Naples speak,—they are so utterly illiterate, ungrammatical, and plebeian in their mode of conversing that it is lamentable!

Here was a princess, who (though she spoke French pretty decently from education) was unable to speak a word of the language of her native land properly; pure Tuscan was High Dutch, or Greek, to her!"

"No doubt your instructions must have edified her—so sage a master!"

"She was a very apt scholar, I assure you, and we were great friends; especially as I pleased her by giving her all the gossip of intrigue that our best family stories, past and present, afford. This is a topic that will arouse even the native drowsiness of a Neapolitan; in fact, we agreed wonderfully; and I was to have accompanied her to Naples, when, quite unexpectedly, a letter reached me, informing me of the regeneration of my depressed fortunes. My banker's estate was fully competent, I learnt, to meet all demands on it, with a consi

overplus, and that what had taken place was the mere effect of an idle temporary panic: my property had sustained no loss. This was a reprieve to me from all the anxiety I had sustained under the idea of my late ill fortune; —it was a signal for my departure and pursuit of Malvina. It was some time before the princess would admit my excuse; 'Engagements in my own country,' she said, 'could easily be put off.' At last I killed my old uncle over again, and declaring that nothing but the death of a valued relative could possibly take me from her, I took my leave, having given assurances of my speedily paying a visit to Naples, and resuming 'my official station,' under my fair governor—or governess rather. So off I went. I flew like a bow-shot to Bologna . . . ."

"And found Malvina?"

"No; nor was there any letter left to say

where she was gone,—or how she did,—or that she thought of me . . . . No remembrance of me, or tidings of herself! I was hurt . . . ."

"Indeed!"

"I was angry."

"I dare say."

"However, I consoled myself, after much revolving the matter in my mind—and how do you think I consoled myself at last?"

"I can't say, indeed. If you were hungry at the time—and are fond of beef-steaks I scarcely think you could have procured consolation to your mind in Italy; there may be other things, however, that might have supplied the place—*quelque chose d'appetissant.*"

"For shame on such badinage!—Thou know'st my stomach was all for love at this moment."

"Well, I'll be serious: how then did you at last find consolation? In some original way, doubtless!"

"I found it in accusing myself as the cause of this apparent neglect on the part of Malvina, rather than herself; for I now remembered stating to her a much earlier period of my return to see her, than that at which I eventually came: so I do not wonder that in the lapse of time, she must have imagined I had certainly forgotten her; and I was now all misery on her account, and heaped reproaches on myself for not having written to inform her of the causes of delay I have already mentioned to you at Rome, relative to my banker's affair. If I had lost her, I had therefore to blame myself. What was more provoking, I could not learn where she was gone; her cousins, on the death of her grandfather, had, it appears, removed from Bologna to Venice, but she was not with them. In fact, I gave her up for lost, as I did not know where to write to her, which I should have done if I could have learned even that she was

at Florence, but this I could gain no information about; so with a heavy heart I set out for my departure from Italy, and the little interest I took in my journey back, showed how much my heart, and with it the power of enjoyment, was out of my own keeping; in truth, it was with Malvina, wherever she might be: what grieved me was, that she did not know she held it! I don't suppose I shall ever see her again."

"Come, come, we shall be growing 'lackadaisical,'—drink a glass of wine—here's to Malvina!"

"With all my heart!" said Jack, rallying.

"And may you soon see her again," added Melmont.

"That's not likely!"

"More likely, perhaps, than you imagine: at any rate, if you do not learn some tidings of her soon, I shall be surprised. How or whence

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So ended the co
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town next season. Meantime, it is fitting that we should answer the object of these pages, by amusing the reader with the idle scenes of the "Recess," according to our proposal, which we shall proceed to endeavour to do for some little period from the next chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

SCENES OF THE RECESS RESUMED: A TRIP TO LEAMINGTON FOR A DAY OR TWO, "BY WAY OF A CHANGE."

may recollect as a very question-asking character,) that he had a friend or two at Leamington; and as they wished to see him before they took leave of that part of the country, he now went over to that place, half a day's journey off, intending to return to Cheltenham immediately; so taking leave of Alice and the Lentworths, and promising he would be back soon, he started for Leamington,

On his arrival at Leamington, he found his friends just on the eve of departure; they went, in fact, the next day, being obliged to set off a little sooner than they had intended: he, himself, delayed a day or two in the place, not being able to resist the luxury of the warm saline baths, so excellent in this improving and increasing place.

As he was sitting in the coffee-room at the "Regent," who should come in but his old

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of this question-dealing, fidgety old 'fogrum;' and while smarting under the annoyance he tacitly determined to be in some way revenged; this resolution, however, or the annoyance which occasioned it, did not of course diminish his natural and habitual politeness; being, besides (as a man of the world), too good an actor ever to betray his feelings by his manner or countenance, should they happen to have received cause of irritation from the impertinent or the vulgar. His philosophy, as well as breeding, always suggested, that to show any discontent or discomfiture on these occasions, was to make the beings you were annoyed at sensible of having elicited a degree of notice of which they were not worthy; the same rule he observed as to the petty sneers or opposition of the malignant, envious, or jealous, whose shafts he never permitted to have any point to wound him, through the

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vidual movements or concerns; it is precisely what one looks for in every old grocer's wife, or retired stock-jobbing cit—animals one has the misfortune of sometimes coming in contact with, by the by, in a mail-coach.

Melmont endured his persecution with Christian forbearance and resignation.

"You have, doubtless," he said, "taken my advice in consulting the great man of the place, Dr. Pharamond?"

"I have, indeed! Wonderful man, I'm told he is; I know he quite astonished me!"

"Ah! what he gave you a speedy cure for a difficult case—like a Bank restriction, to save the necessity of pleading a national bankruptcy—or the Leucadian leap for curing the frenzy of lovers!"

"Nay, he did more! He anticipated the 'speedy cure,' inasmuch as he said there was no cure at all necessary! He told me my com-

plaint was all—fancy!—don't agree with him at all!"

"You ought to be delighted! and offer a cock to Æsculapius! as the ancients used to say. What physician is there, but Dr. Pharamond, would so disinterestedly pronounce your cure, and dismissal from the sick list? Did not your heart leap for joy at being told you were well? Why, if it did not, you must be a very ingrate!"

Melmont could not undergo the tax of listening to the twaddle of this oafish *malade imaginaire* without indulging in a little raillery at the expense of his weakness. To think himself ill and ailing, was an additional trait in Mr. Cobb's character to that of his catechising propensities,—he did not, therefore, quite enter into the humour of Melmont's reply.

"I can't think it possible, considering my nervous complaint has been on me so long, that

it is all fancy! I don't like to be told so—I don't indeed—one does not like to be told, however politely or indirectly, that one is a fool."

"Ah, Sir, you must 'give and take;' this is but what people are told every day! You have the opportunity of retaliating on your friends, or your enemies (for friends, as they are called, often are enemies) every day! it is the way of the world, Mr. Cobb—Mr. Cobb, it is the way of the world; don't let it annoy you."

"Well," said the unsophisticated Cobb, not perceiving Melmont was laughing at him—(with the respectable authority, too, of Dr. Pharamond for doing so)—"well, it is very kind of you, trying to reconcile one to what is unpleasant; but I declare I don't like to be persuaded that I have been physicking myself to death for these twenty years past for nothing! I must say it is unpleasant—and this I must say, too, if it was

'fancy,' as this Dr. Pharamond declares my 'complaint' to be,—that I only know, I fancy myself ten times worse now, than before I consulted him. Pshaw! fancy!—it's no such thing! and I am ten times worse, that's certain!"

Poor Cobb said this in a dreadful huff, dudgeon, and burlesque of mortified pride. Melmont replied, unable to suppress a propensity to laugh,—

"Now I really believe you are indisposed."

"I am, I am!" interrupted the delighted Cobb.

"You look bilious!—yellow as a guinea, and green as a lizard, by turns—a very chameleon of a complexion; I could believe that the sight of that bilious green-looking Stygian river, the Leam, has turned you—by a sort of contagion—green!—Pharamond's repulse has made you look 'blue,'—and the bile excited by a just indignation, has given you a yellow tinge; by turns

you exhibit these hues, which come and go "most admiredly!" You are indisposed, Mr. Cobb—you are indisposed!—take care of yourself—take care——"

"Oh, I will! I will!" interposed Cobb, speaking feelingly for himself, and soothed by this kind sympathy.

"Surely, though, Dr. Pharamond, by way of form, gave you some prescription—some regimen—gracious! he has not neglected this, I trust!"

"No, no, that he has not! and there is the inconsistency," cried Cobb, in a twaddling "feeble-forcible" exultation; "there is the inconsistency, I say! He puts me on a regimen after he has told me I have no complaint—and can consequently need none!"

"Oh, that does not follow. I admire the discretion and sagacity of Dr. Pharamond; he wishes to prevent your having any of the com-

plaints which he says you imagine you have. You ought to thank him, *au contraire!* Well, what is his regimen? what I told you it would be?"

"Precisely—a mutton chop and a glass of sherry, one cup of tea, morning and evening, and half the contents of a saltcellar in my plate at each meal! Short commons, indeed! I fancy, with all deference to Dr. Pharamond, that if my complaint has hitherto been but a delusion, it will not longer be so: I shall be impoverished—reduced to death's door, with such a diet, Mr. Melmont."

"Then your woes will be over, and you must admit yourself effectually cured! Pooh, pooh! you have been let off very lightly. How many physicians would have made a prey of you, and 'pigeoned' you, as we call it at Crockford's—would have thought you a good subject to have 'plucked' regularly every year — would

have persuaded and dosed you into real maladies, instead of persuading you out of imaginary ones! Don't be piqued, Mr. Cobb, but rejoice in your mutton chops! and mind you drink Dr. Pharamond's health in the first glass of sherry you pour out—if you do not, you will be ungrateful."

"I confess I am inclined to be a little piqued:—however, if the mutton chop is well done, and the sherry good, I shall not be inclined to quarrel with the doctor! But I tell you, Mr. Melmont," (note the style in which Cobb talks; quite worthy of a twaddling *malade imaginaire*, whose wits are at 'zero') "I don't like being restricted in my meals; if I may eat a mutton chop I may eat a beef steak, surely, or a chicken, or a little fish. I like a little variety, and shall enlarge my bill of fare, I think, without much breach of the doctor's prescriptions, eh?"

"As you please—consider your valuable health! but as you please—meantime, I warn you! Wherefore go you to the physician, if you abide not by his rules? Only take care that he does not catch you transgressing, which he might, should he pounce in upon you unexpectedly to pay a visit; for he drops in upon his patients like a 'thief in the night,' as the scripture says, to catch them unawares sometimes, and see if they are attending to his rules—take care, that is all."

"I will order nothing that can hurt me—you speak kindly to warn me—I feel your kindness——"

"Oh, do not mention this!"

"I am sensible of your caution," said the grateful Cobb, touched at our hero's sympathy; "let Pharamond drop in when he will, he shall not have cause to be displeased! You will dine with me, won't you?"

Melmont was a little startled at this proposition, which was a penance he was not quite prepared for, when a happy thought struck him, which was amusing, as it involved the consideration of taking a pleasant revenge on Cobb, for annoying him with his twaddle: accordingly he appeared pleased at the proposal, volunteered to order dinner himself, and left the coffee-room, with the plan of the poor "fancy" invalid's discomfiture, as this history will in due time unfold. He got on his horse, and rode towards Kenilworth, to get an airing and an appetite.—Cobb went poking down to the bath, got shampooed for an imagined rheumatism, and drank enough of saline to physic a dray-horse, not forgetting the indulgence of his knack of seizing upon every one he knew, that came in his way, and catechising, right and left, *à l'ordi-*

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against Dr. Pharai

no complaint at all

CHAPTER X.

THE RENCONTRE.

Ah, Count, well met!
The last thought I had harbour'd, was to meet
Thee in this distant and deserted spot!
The greater is the joy, the less expected!
Haply chance bends our steps to the same goal,
For higher purpose than this casual greeting
Looks to. THE REVOLT, *Old Play.*

WELL, whom should Melmont meet amongst the ruins of Kenilworth? The reader may well suppose it was not the injured shade of "poor

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us to do more than hint at this unhappy trait in the Count's character, without explaining the "why, or the wherefore."

Vasari was as much pleased at meeting our hero, as he was to meet his foreign friend. They greeted each other warmly, with mutual expressions of surprise and pleasure at the rencontre. Melmont inquired after the Countess.

"Have you brought her to England with you?" he added.

"No, I have not; she is remaining with my brother, the abbot Lanzi, at the 'casa' near Genoa."

"Have you heard lately from her?"

"No, indeed, not now for some little time, at which I am rather surprised, but conclude she is very well, or be assured there would have been little delay in her letting me have the intelli-

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family history). "Indeed, you will find your son not so much to blame as you think—permit me to intercede——"

"My dear friend," interrupted the Count, again, "I appreciate your kind endeavours to reconcile me to one I have too much reason to think harshly of—let me beg of you not to continue the subject—it would be but of little avail. I have too strong testimony (from those who would not wish to deceive me) of the justice of my displeasure."

Melmont saw any endeavour to appease the irritation, or prejudice, whichever it might be, of the father against his absent son, would be to no purpose, so he turned the conversation to a different subject—that is, to an indifferent subject—and found none better, at present, than an exclamation of praise, at the beauty of the ruin before them.

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With these remarks, and many others of a suitable character, they walked round the ruins till they had satisfied their curiosity, when they mounted their horses, and rode back to Leamington in each other's company. The time passed in inquiries, on Melmont's part, after various friends at Florence,—at which city was the Count's residence, though he had chateaux at Genoa and elsewhere: while at the same time our hero was delighted with the prospect of being able to repay the kindness of his friend to himself when abroad, in giving him whatever information he required now he was in England;—putting him in the way of any route he wished to follow,—or, in fact, being of service to him in any way he was able, not forgetting an invitation to his house, either in town or in the country. The period of the ride was agreeably filled up in the discussion of

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down by a great medical sage of the place, whose *dictum* is law, and to transgress whose injunctions as to diet, is little less than treason or lese-majesty in Leamington. Now it is my intention to call on this said great Galen, whose name is Dr. Pharamond, advertise him of the meditated outrage of his law—and, in fact . . . . I won't let out the secret of the joke till it is enacted . . . . I will promise, however, to dine with you; and as to the dinner, leave that to me—you will be safe in my hands."

"I dare say I shall," said the Count, laughing; "I am quite curious to know how you will compass your engagement with me, and what your plot is with respect to your engagement also to this hapless invalid, who seems thus treasonably inclined in infringing the rules of Dr. Pharamond."

"You shall know all in good time! But

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CHAPTER XI.

COBB IN A QUANDARY! "CHOP AND CHANGE SIDES." THE TWO BONS-VIVANS TOGETHER, "EATING AND DRINKING."

Of these my lord governor shall not eat while there is breath in my body! said Dr. Pedro Positive de Bodewell Snatchaway.

DON QUIXOTE.

WHEN Cobb walked into the room where dinner was set out, he opened his leaden eyes, and started as if the "vision itself of St. Jerome" had danced in phantasmagoria before him.

"Here, Fleuret! order up some hock and champagne," said Melmont to his valet.

"Why, Mr. Melmont," said Cobb, "what is all this? You have ordered a dinner fit for a prince!"

"Yes, yes, I took good care that, as you intrusted to me the ordering of the dinner, you should dine like yourself! Mutton chops, indeed, and stale bread!—faugh! It might do for the 'lay-brother in the Duenna,' or for a servitor at college,—but for you, Mr. Cobb!—I flatter myself I understand ordering something fit to be served up at a gentleman's table."

"Truly tempting!" cried the admiring Cobb, as he eyed a most inviting tureen of *soupe-a-la-crême*, made under Fleuret's especial supervision; "delicious! What, have you a French cook, Mr. Melmont?"

"Yes, yes!—at least my valet is a

'French cook,' and every thing else too!—so sit down, sit down, my dear sir, 'the proof of the pudding,' &c.—you remember the proverb. Don't praise Fleuret till you know whether he deserves your approbation. Come, let me help you to a little soup."

"What would Dr. Pharamond say?" cried Cobb, half alarmed at his temerity; as a child may be supposed to be, who is quietly picking a peach from some forbidden tree; or as Eve, when, half afraid and half pleased, she ventured to put the fatal fruit to her lips, "and bad luck to her!" as Mr. O'Callaghan would say. "What would Dr. Pharamond say?" he repeated.

"Pshaw! Dr. Pharamond!" exclaimed Melmont: "are we to abide—we men of spirit—by his mutton chop law, as though it were inviolable as that of the 'Medes and Persians?' *Soupe*

à la crême for us, instead of salt and stale bread! *matelotte d'anguille* instead of mutton chop!—Dr. Pharamond, indeed!"

...."I'll teach you how to eat *matelotte d'anguille*," exclaimed a voice, which burst like a clap of thunder on the terrified and astounded Cobb, as, at the same time, in rushed the infuriate Pharamond, who, it appears, had overheard this traitorous conspiracy against his law, and now witnessed the open violation of it—the "*flagrans delictum*" (as lawyers would say) itself! Cobb trembled like an aspen leaf, while Dr. Pharamond continued to rave on, knowing the character he had to deal with:—"What, Mr. Cobb! is this the way that my advice is to be trifled with? Is this the indignity you offer me? To come and consult me, and then to act in direct defiance of the rules I so particularly enjoined you to pursue! Here, waiter," he continued, turning to

the attendants, "take away these mischievous dishes—no patient of mine shall touch them!—'Cholera'* lurks under every cover! indigestion is the very substance and grain of every dish!—the *soupe* is poison itself."—("Oh!" groaned out the unhappy Cobb, frightened quite "out of his propriety," his nervous system being put into an agitation little short of the quivering of alder boughs over a river in an evening breeze—"oh! oh!")—"the *soupe* is poison!" reiterated the incensed Galen.—"What business has that hock either, there?" continued he in direful apostophe; "did I not expressly request nothing but sherry might be made use of? Mr. Cobb, Mr. Cobb, is this fair? is this right? is this placing confidence in me?—Away with it! away with it! away with the rest, too, of the things,—the pernicious dishes, and the more

* See Dedication, p. 1.

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that it was not at all through him that this violation of the "mutton chop law" was perpetrated,—Mr. Cobb had, in fact, authorised him to order dinner! Meantime Pharamond had raged on with unabated fury, and poor Cobb, being discountenanced by Melmont, was overwhelmed, and *chop*-fallen indeed, at this doleful exemplification of the importance of Pharamond's "chop system." During the *mêlée* (for all was put in confusion on the entry of the terrible physician), Melmont had taken care that the dishes ordered away purposely by Pharamond, should be forthwith transferred, still "piping-hot," to another room in the hotel, where the Count Vasari was waiting with a good appetite for dinner and his friend. Melmont soon joined him, and recounted the scene, much to the amusement of himself, the Count, and the valet Fleuret, who had been a party in prompting

his master to this felicitous *mouvement.* This "Scapin" was a clever fellow, understood cooking as well as hair-dressing, and, in fact, was no less a "factotum," than the renowned "Bob Restamy" claimed to be.

The signal for Dr. Pharamond's entry had been given by him; and he had also called off his master, on the excuse that some person "demanded his presence below," to the abandonment of Cobb, *solus*—to bear the brunt of the rage of the Doctor, and to finish his ill-omened dinner on the mutton chops subsequently provided—it being intimated to him "that Mr. Melmont would be unable to return, with ten thousand apologies, that evening." The whole plot had been good-humouredly entered into by Pharamond himself, on Melmont's conferring with him about it. How well it was carried into execution, through the Doctor's agency, we have already seen; the happy result of the whole

been won, of accomplishing a riddance to our hero of the company of a "bore," and winning for him that of a friend, whom he was so glad to see: the entertainment, meanwhile, that it was determined the first should not touch, was precisely adapted to the palate of the last, and to this accordingly, (in full enjoyment of the joke just described, and of the repast before them,) the two friends now sat down.

"Capital!" cried Melmont; "I shan't forget this piece of amusement for some time! I am delighted with Pharamond, he seconded my plan so good humouredly and readily! The whole scene was a complete melo-drame,—the bustle, confusion, consternation!—it only wanted the flourish of a trumpet or two, to make it agreeable to the completest stage-effect."

The Count laughed, as he replied, "I really think, from your description of Mr. Cobb, these

choice viands of Fleuret's preparing would have been thrown away! *Capo di papa!* I never heard a better joke in my life! It beats a host of *pasquinades*, as much as Arthur Melmoot beats Antony Pasquin!"

"You say rightly, the dinner would have been thrown away on a dull, drivelling, vulgar tyke, such as this Cobb. Hang the simpleton, his palate hath no 'soul' in it to appreciate the merits of any one of these 'cates' before us! He is a fellow who would devour you up *beccaficos* as indifferently as if they were solid beef—horror! with no '*raffinement!*' and would show as little smack of any *gusto* in addressing himself to that dish of *matelotte d'anguille*, as if it were the mutton chops we have left him to the full and undisturbed enjoyment of!"

"Assuredly," replied the Count with a mock gravity; "it is a horrid profanation of good

taste to see a being, of an 'unsophisticated' palate, ravage the dishes he does not 'understand,'—(either as to their merits *de chymie* or *de gout*—their qualities, or their ingredients)—as it is to witness any moral profanation!"

"Only conceive the misappropriation! this delectable *soupe-à-la-crême* whetting the '*obscenæ fauces*' of a 'plain-dinner' eating knave such as Cobb!"

"A fellow who thinks turtle soup and venison the acmé of revelry;—the ideas you 'Citizens' of England have, with your aldermen at your head, eh, is not that true?"

"I fancy it is—what notion we have of culinary mysteries is borrowed from our more expert neighbours the French, in 'chronicling' and preparing all matters of taste! We English are 'men of substance;' we eat substantially—drink substantially—think substantially—witness

our wealth and our stout bulky figures, in the first instance; our roast beef and plum-pudding in the next; our 'black dose' Oporto decoction in the third; and our dull way of getting ourselves into 'National distress,' in the last. No wonder," he continued, laughing, "we are clogged with the heavy load of a 'National debt,' above other nations, when our intellects are beclogged and besotted with such solidities in the shape of meats and drinks! Woe betide the taste for solid dinners, the 'dining from one substantial dish,' as we say. I never had a taste this way! In fact, these 'solid dinners' agree not with me so well as a lighter and more diversified repast; yet we English consider them wholesome."

"Nothing is so true, as that the wits are mainly influenced by the quality of the juices we imbibe, the blood engendered by the viands we nourish ourselves withal. Certes! there is

nothing equal to a repast of a generous nature,—and especially,—accompanied with wine as good as this which I shall have the pleasure of drinking with you."

"Fine Burgundy, this!" said Melmont. "Some of my own, sent over from France on purpose; I ordered it when at Paris, and brought a hamper of it down from town. I can't drink the wine they have at their hotels in England; and their French wines are very inferior, generally speaking."

"You did quite right to have a few dozen of your own wine sent you; this Burgundy is in excellent condition. Let me give you a little of this lobster pâté."

"Did you ever acquire a taste for the *grenouilles à la Bourgogne?* I think it a very excellent dish, but your countrymen can seldom acquire a taste for it; I think there is a vast delicacy,

as well as *gusto*, about it, to a discriminating palate, which is able to analyse duly the rare essences that belong to that incomparable dish!"

"Yes, I like it very much: but, then, it is indebted a great deal for its flavour to the sort of *purée d'ecrivasses* mashed up with the *grenouilles*; then there is the *sauce piquante* besides, and a gravy into the bargain, so that the poor *grenouilles* are left in the lurch in the multifarious composition! As a whole, the dish is admirable!"

"With a glass of fine cool Johannisberg afterwards, to qualify it!"

"Sardanapalus never had a richer banquet! '*Bithyno rege beatior*,' is he who partakes of it—the way *à la Bourgogne* is far better than the mode you had at Rome of dressing the *grenouille* in a paste, or *en marinade!*"

"Oh, far! there is no comparison; the last

allows no exercise scarcely for the functions of the palate. There is no rich extraction of juices," said the Count, with the true *gusto* of an epicure, "the dish is *fâde*—the palate dissatisfied—the repast insipid—the spirits depressed—I am never well after it, till I have drunk at least a flask full of '*Diamante*.' Do you like our *Diamante?*"

"Oh, for Italy, it is very good; but a glass of Hermitage, or Lafitte, is worth a legion of flasks of it; just as a fine well stuffed ortolan, or *beccafico* served upon a toast, and *bien garni de truffes*, and with a good sauce, is worth a hecatomb of our beef steaks!"

"There is no way I like beginning a dinner in, so well, as with oysters and a slice of ham, well seasoned *pre'salé*, it is so judicious a commencement!"

"Ay, the oysters to whet the appetite for

the eating part of the duty, and giving elasticity to the gastric juice, and the ham to awaken that agreeable craving for liquid, which completes the full requisite for the enjoyment of a dinner!"

"Precisely! it is an excellent rule, that of oysters and ham *par commencement*, and we Italians have the merit of setting this fashion first — the rule should be as inviolable (if a man wishes really to enjoy a repast,) as Pharamond's mutton-chop law appears to be here!"

"Bravo! let us drink the good Doctor Pharamond's health! and success to him for helping us to enact our comedy of this evening, and spend it in each other's good company!"

"Dr. Pharamond's very good health," said the Count, as he pledged Melmont in a glass of champagne on the present occasion.

"This *œil de perdrix* champagne is very fair,—though not so good as the white champagne."

"No, I don't like it so well—and wonder who *can!* I prefer the 'sparkling' to the 'dry:'—still the *œil de perdrix*, as it used to be called, was at one time in as great vogue as the white.

"I can't bear your washy breakfasts in England—your 'tea and coffee.' I'm a great advocate, on principle, for the *déjeuner à la fourchette*—I think it a far superior diet: doubtless, it must be very moderate, else it takes away from the appetite for another meal in the day on animal food."

"Certainly—dinner and its *agrémens* may be infringed on by any previous refreshment of a similar kind; but moderation and due tact must be observed, in so catering the provision

for breakfast that it does not trench upon the province of dinner, or permit the palate to be jaded by the repetition of tastes."

"There are peculiar dishes appropriate to the *déjeuner à la fourchette*, such as the *rognons*, and grill, and the *côtelettes de presalé*, *volailles en papillote*, or a little *pâté de gibier*."

"Yes, yes, some light affair of this kind makes an excellent *nourriture* for a morning's repast. I am very much for supporting the frame and the spirits, with a generous diet of this kind; it sends a man into the world to perform the duties of the day with ten times the energy, alacrity, confidence, and strength, that a cup of tea or coffee would afford him, with a little toast, as is your way in England."

"I agree with you here entirely," said Melmont; "I consider that to enable and permit

us to do our talents justice, our frames should be well supported, and our blood warmed by generous diet. I was maintaining this principle to a certain fair widow lady the other day at dinner."

"There is this to be said on the subject—in England you have (to speak generally) no light wine that you can make use of to accompany a *déjeuner à la fourchette*, as is the case in France, unless indeed you mix sherry with water."

"Yet, supposing no wine were used at all,—still the viands eaten would fortify the system more, and give greater nourishment and "encouragement" to a man, than our present breakfast diet—much greater, doubtless . . . . The *soupçon* of oysters in the seasoning of this dish is very well managed, Fleuret," continued Melmont referring to the said lac-

quey, (who had, as we have observed, superintended the dressing of the dishes); "let me give you a little of this, Count, you will find it very good: it is a kind of *bechamel*, I fancy . . . . !"

But not to protract this gastronomic "chit-chat,"—the repast being at length concluded, the Count and Melmont were left with some "La Fitte" to keep them company, and keep alive the merriment that had been so well kindled through the dinner, and so facetiously begun in the "pleasant drama" of poor Cobb's discomfiture. Like Sancho, after his physician had snatched his dishes from him, he sat at the vacant board doleful and be-devilled, maundering at the meagre commons of a mutton chop, which was at length brought him, much burnt, and tough. Where were those invitingly smoking and savoury dishes that had greeted his first

approach to the table? Gone! whisked off by the merciless Pharamond, as rapidly as he whisks himself about to his patients in his whiskey—the board presenting the mockery of a repast, like the Barmecide's dinner in the Arabian Nights! Melancholy was the evening of Cobb, as noted in his journal of that day, and marked "*nigro lapide*"—he was indeed not an invalid in fancy merely, through that luckless evening! Pharamond himself would have allowed he was indisposed. So we wish him, with this condolence, a good night, and "good bye," should we not chance to fall in with him again in the course of our history. Pleasanter were the dreams of the Count and Melmont, of that night, inspired by the "better cates" snatched from the tantalised lips of Cobb! Pleasanter were they, than the melancholy visions that haunted the pillow of the question-

asking invalid! Him Pharamond's angry visage scared! him the "ghost of a scrag of mutton," with a "legion of lesser imps" in the shape of tough mutton chops, haunted, with unsavoury visages and steam! But peace be to Cobb! for us he will neither bore nor bother more, with any further catechising or complaint, and thanks to him (for we would part friends) for the mirth he has afforded us at his expense.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RETURN TO OUR OLD QUARTERS. HUMOURS OF A TABLE D'HOTE.

Avec un dégout même je les regarde! toujours cette foule inépuisable! c'est la Monotonie qui m'acharne.

ROUSSEAU.

THE Count Vasari, though a *bon-vivant*, and luxurious in his habits, was not less a man of erudition, elegant learning, and all that *dilettante* lore which men pique themselves on, as giving them claim to refinement

of mind. It is not our intention to fill a volume, as some would take the opportunity of doing, with remarks of this character, which might be useful, instructive, or agreeable enough, but would certainly form too unwarrantable an interpolation on the province of our story: suffice it to say, that Melmont and the Count were friends, because they found in each other an order of mind they both valued, and a congeniality of tastes that made companionship grateful. Their journey, consequently, from Leamington to Cheltenham, whither the Count was on his way,—(as much for the pleasure of seeing it as for his health, perhaps,)—was everything that was agreeable. It may be imagined that they did not pass through Stratford-on-Avon without paying some tribute to the memory of that favourite son and mighty interpreter of Nature—Shakspeare ....

Heavens! to look at the humble cottage—the hut almost—in which he first saw the light, and to think of the greatness of that name, above those even of the princes of the earth, who are cradled in purple and have nations at their beck! How the contemplation makes the "great" of this earth dwindle away.... as very mists, dissipated and lost before the dazzling, ever-enduring, glory of day!....

The subject of Shakspeare of course led to an interesting literary discussion, on the merits, minds, and characteristics of other great geniuses; not the least so was the comparison the companions made between Milton and Dante, which two poets appeared to be their favorites, out of the whole galaxy of mighty minds and children of song which they recounted. Melmont, who was full of imagination, of course revelled in Milton; the language of this bard he c

as having a stamp of divinity about it, reflected in none other. Dante's gloom too, delighted him—which may appear singular, as we have represented him, generally speaking, so far from being of a gloomy disposition. We have seen him, however, in society, and here a man plays a part—and it ought to be an agreeable one, or society need little thank him for his company. What a man really is, who can tell? Who can unmask the heart, and know the latent causes of care that it is our duty to veil, but which are perhaps the darker, the more we endeavour to throw the glittering veil of gaiety over them. Vasari's raptures were much heaped on the mighty poet of passion—Byron. This is his distinguishing characteristic; that of Milton and Dante is imagination. Of the first, of a more vague and sublime character; of the last, of a more specified and particularising description,

and most rightly, as Dante describes everything as an eye-witness. As for poor Shelley, both our *dilettanti* declared, that if it had not been for Byron, to whose name Shelley's was attached, the world would never have known him,—so impracticable are his theories, so unadapted to human sympathy, and the selfishness of our nature,—for to these must the poet appeal if he wishes to win us to listen to him. Shelley lived in a world of his own, where no one can sympathise with him, except in admiring his fancy; and out of curiosity, perhaps, in following his metaphysical, theoretic, impracticable, and merely visionary notions. Milton, though full of imagination, takes care to exhibit pictures with which human nature sympathises, and which are not out of the range of its feelings, however excursive the imagination of the poet may be. Melmont, however, who had known and

had a regard for Shelley for his virtues, gave him the due that an excellent, amiable being deserves; and also the due that his brilliancy of fancy, and his wish for the regeneration of men, for their happiness, demanded,—although this wish, however kindly felt, could never be reflected in any practicable plan. Shelley forgot the corruption and frailty of our nature—intrinsic human nature—which can never be pure and perfect as he would wish to have seen it,—which he wished to believe it to be *per se;* laying all the blame only on the corruptions of artificial life, social shackles, and the restraints imposed by tyranny! Alas! if he is right to a certain extent, how much dazzled was he by his dreams of wished-for perfection not to perceive the intrinsic impurity of human nature itself, independently of being made worse, in some instances, by artificial laws! That it is made infinitely better, however, in

some instances, there is no doubt; and, on the whole, far better!

The Count Vasari had been a great friend of Goëthe's, and a sort of comparison took place now between his genius and that of Shakspeare: this we shall not enter into, as we fear we should be transgressing the determination laid down to ourselves, of not making these digressions an excuse to fill out a volume On this one point a discussion depends which would involve a multifarious list of other considerations—such as the genius of the German nation; and then comparison would rise as Pelion on Ossa—as snow-heap on snow-heap—so that we might fill up a host of volumes at this rate. We have, therefore, done, by saying that the Bard of Avon had the palm assigned to him, above every other mind,—and which he deserves—for who so well as himself ever knew the arena of Passions on

which he wrote? He entered into the spirits of men, reflected them as they were, spoke to their sympathies in every class, complexion, character, denomination, degree, sense and affection;—all varied, all true,—a living picture of human kind...

Such subjects of entertainment, and various others,—such as discussions of English character, by the Count, and the manner in which he had been received by some as compared with others,—all served to fill up the time till they arrived at the end of their journey. On their arrival Melmont assisted his friend in finding out a residence that suited him. It was one of those beautiful houses on the Promenade. After seeing the Count thus comfortably disposed of, our hero, as may be supposed, was glad to go and see his friends in Lansdowne Place. His joy was wildness itself to meet Alice, and hers was no less so to see him again.

After amusing his friends with his Leamington adventures, it was proposed to resume their drives and rides, in the environs of the place, as heretofore, in the interval previously to Melmont's departure for town, back to his sister, with whom he continually corresponded, amusing—or interesting her—with his adventures and reflections. Amongst other subjects that he inquired about of Lady Lentworth, relating to their former drives, was that of little Agnes, who was still doing well at school, and whom they went over to see the next day. A trip to Birdlip, a beautiful Swiss-like village in the neighbourhood, was proposed and agreed on. Lady Lentworth and Sir Jasper expressed a wish to be introduced to the Count, which Melmont promised to do. He now went to call on his foreign friend, at a very handsome dwelling he had recommended to him, during his *séjour*

at Cheltenham, facing the public walks. He did not forget, either, to look in at the Priory House, where he was a universal favourite; and, in fact, they detained him to dine there that day, and—to introduce us again to the humours of the *table d'hôte*, and its characters. O'Callaghan did not the least exhibit his *empressement* of satisfaction at seeing him again, for the very reason that he wished to conceal his jealousy of our hero on a very delicate subject; in a word, he had hoped that, now Melmont was married, and that there could be no danger of his running off with the fair and rich widow, Mrs. Angus,—he had hoped, we say, that she was now possibly to be a prize for himself! The coast was clear to pay his addresses—no Melmont in the way to amuse, interest, or dazzle her—and eclipse him; he had hoped he should make some ground in addresses he was anxious she should favour. But, alas!

no such thing. She threw cold water on his advances; and, consequently, on regarding our hero, he felt his full inferiority, being unable to win (with all his assiduities, ungainly indeed, but not less anxious) a prize which Melmont might have had for the mere asking.

It may be imagined, then, that with his impatience provoked, and his self-love mortified, he regarded our hero more and more with an evil eye; and (somewhat like the dog in the manger), though he could not enjoy the prize himself, yet he was angry to think another might have had it in preference to himself. Great then was the dudgeon he tacitly cherished in his "indignant breast," as the classics have it, against his former rival,—whose qualities had made so lasting an impression on the fair widow, that they were enough to supplant her inclination for liking any one else she at present saw

about her—certainly himself, O'Callaghan.—Mark, alas! the consequence . . . Who knows on what resolve mortified self-love will not urge a spirit like his? . . . . "Am I unredressed, and live?" saith the Ancient in the play. Who knows, but that at length our Emeralder, exasperated beyond the power of self-controul, may feel his warm Irish blood so much kindled, that his rage may avow itself in some hostile movement? This we must leave to time to show. At present, he veiled his smothered dudgeon with as hideous a grin as it was possible for him to elongate his horse-jaws into: at Donnybrook fair he would have made his fortune in gaining hatfuls of *tin*-pennies for such a feat of physiognomic distortion, in quality of clown in front of a show; at the same time, he squeezed his former rival's hand with such potent marks of friendship,

that the thumb-screws of the Inquisition or Star-Chamber could not have inflicted greater torture. This operation was performed across the table, and with a manner strange enough,—the hand being poked forward by an ungainly jerk at the elbow, as if it were being thrust into fire for a punishment.

"We're so happy to see ye, sure!" exclaimed O'Callaghan, at the same time.

"We, indeed, felt your loss," said Mrs. Angus; "we were quite dull without you."

O'Callaghan was stung to the quick at this kind remark bestowed on his rival, while Melmont bowed to the fair widow, and replied.

"Indeed, you honour me much;" at the same time he added jocularly, "only conceive what a loser must I have been! for if you were sensible of the loss of one person in my absence from the party, I must have felt the regret multiplied by

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" Upon my

me, it will be desirable in me to absent myself now and then for a short time," replied Melmont, laughing, and taking the Irishman's blarney for what it was worth, and no more.

"Is Leamington very gay at present?" asked Mrs. Angus; "I think I have heard you say you preferred Cheltenham."

"I will do justice to both: if I am quietly disposed, and an invalid, requiring the warm shower-bath and a jog in a 'fly,' by way of airing, Leamington is just the place I would go to; but this suits me not! This, which might aid the cure of some, would make me ill! I like the din of life, the variety of countenances, the busy movement of animated matter, the theme for innocent 'quizzery,' and a constant source of escape from *ennui*,—and one's self occasionally —Oh, I much prefer Cheltenham!"

"So! you are now all in praise of gaiety!

but you were saying to me the other day,—as to dancing, for instance,—that you were indifferent to it, after the campaign of a London season—you were tired, in fact, of gaiety!"

"Yes; but if you remember, I made an exception in favour of one person, and she was the only one with whom I danced, or for whom my spirit of gaiety acquired any thing like impulse!"

"You mean—the then Miss Lentworth?"

"The exception, as logicians say, proves the rule!—and now when I praise the gaiety of this place, I mean, that there is liveliness here, if one wishes to partake of it, rather than that I come here to be gay—for what I said, I still say, that after a campaign through the London 'season,' a man retires to the country to be quiet, rather than restless But I know not how it is, the coteries one sees here are so different from

those one sees in town, that the novelty of this amuses me! Many respectable old country families flock here in the summer, as their season of gaiety; many interesting and excellent Irish families;—and these make a variety in the monotonous routine of the everlasting phalanx of 'London acquaintances.' Every year the same living phantasmagoria floats regularly by one! You see the same faces, appearing dull from their regular recurrence—the young, justly, growing more cross and dissatisfied as they grow older; their hopes delayed or disappointed (I speak of females more particularly now) of getting 'established' for life, that is, married; and the young men becoming old bachelors—losing the graceful levity of youth, without acquiring the decent gravity of advanced life—uninteresting 'middle aged' men! One sees one's own years reflected in the 'advance in life' bespoken in

the countenances and bearing of one's cotemporaries ..... All this may be considered as a mere feeling of impatience, disgust, or fastidiousness; yet I can't help feeling it! though, heaven knows, on the other hand, I am glad to meet my friends again—I care not how often."

"I confess, I think there is a little savour of cynicism in this," said Mrs Angus; "I fear you have 'lived' a little 'too much' in your time, and that this fastidiousness, this loathing and impatience, arises from a little surfeiting—satiety in the pleasures and levities of life—is it not so?"

Melmont made no reply; while the widow continued, "Unless the sentiment you express were the result of a jaded appetite, and of a morbid temperament, you could never, at your time of life, feel or speak so! At any rate, you deserve credit for unmasking and throwing off the dis-

guise which you, generally speaking, carry so far well,—that no one would imagine you felt disgust at the gaiety you, in truth, seem the warmest to engage in!"

"What else does one do, but play a part in society! It is but fair to unmask one's self to those we respect and like enough to place confidence in, and to unbosom one's self to, apart from the din of the world, and the ear of idle listeners"—(and here he thought of Alice)—"but the world forces one to be hypocritical, to bear about the mockery of pleasure and glee, or else we should put society out of countenance! There is no man who is a better philosopher in this respect than my old friend Sir Jasper, in his doctrine of keeping up appearances."

The conversation continued: and was rather ludicrously resumed on the part of O'Callaghan

(impatient to interrupt the *tête-à-tête* of the fair widow and Melmont), by his asking the latter "if he liked whiskey?"

"In the Highlands, when grouse-shooting, I liked it; I have not tasted any since."

"If ye do like it, here's some excellent. Will ye taste it? Here, take this whiskey to Misther Melmont," he added, sending it round.

"Potent, indeed, this!" said Melmont, puckering up his lips, after applying the glass to them. "Liquid fire! 'Usquebaugh burnt the Irishman,' as the song says, indeed! I understand the full force of the stave at this moment."

"Don't you like it?" asked the disconcerted O'Callaghan, who always was armed with his favourite whiskey at dinner.

"It is a little too hot, and has not the peculiar taste of the 'peat,' which I am fond of in the

Scotch whiskey; though I dare say it is very good; but it is neither Glenlivet nor Farintosh."

"Ah! it shall be vary good, shall it! I do assure ye, it is what the Marquis of A——— (who was then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland) always has for his own private drinking!"

"An enviable cellar — and taste too, the Marquis must have!"

"Isn't he our lord-lieutenant—and hasn't he made whuskey-thrinking fashionable!"

"Oh, doubtless—but I am never in fashion," said Melmont.

"Never in fashion! Never's a long day!" exclaimed O'Callaghan. "I thought ye would ever be in it! Ye must reform yourself here, ye must!"

As usual, the sound of reform did not escape the ears of Mr. Fleming, whom we recorded in the preceding volume to have been an endless

bore on the subject of reform and cholera: of course he applied the import of the word he overheard to the subject of all-engrossing interest —with him especially.

"Reform, did you say?—aye, it is much wanted, indeed! Was the amendment carried, Mr. Melmont, the other night?"

Our hero, as usual, when Mr. Fleming addressed him on either reform or cholera, did his best to turn aside the current of the remark, and replied, "Amendment—did you say?—Oh, Yes! in the Duke of ———'s health—very great, I think. Far less bilious, his complexion: it was the colour of gamboge a week or two ago, and now it is only a buff colour——"

"No, that was not exactly what I was asking about—it was the amendment in the Re——"

"In the road to Tewkesbury from Cheltenham. Oh, very great indeed! Abominable

—the old road is quite infamous; ruts in which you could bury a hogshead; upsettings at every milestone. There are the men squatted on their hams, cracking stones, like a phalanx of apes nut-cracking . . . . ."

"No, no, I did not precisely shape my remarks in that direction . . . . ."

"Oh, the other direction—the other road! Ay, that was bad enough, too!—it's all the same thing, north, south, east, or west, M'Adam's glory is equally great—*si monumentum quæris, circumspice*—everywhere you are reminded of his fame."

Poor Fleming thought it was of little use continuing the subject on which it appeared to him that our hero was rather hard of hearing. How he had the temerity to venture so far as he did, we know not, after the down-setting we remember his having received some chapters

back, on a similar subject. Despairing of gaining any one to sympathise with him, in his desire of wading through the "Reform question," he tried to shift his ground to his other favourite topic, the "Cholera question," which attempt it was our hero's business, as usual, to divert, and annihilate as well as he could, like an expert tactician.

Mr. Fleming, after deliberately sipping some wine, placed down his glass and gravely inquired,

"By the by, — have you heard the latest accounts of the progress of the cholera?"

"Progress of the ——— I beg your pardon," said Melmont, "I did not precisely hear."

"Of the cholera?"

"Of the Niger! oh yes! Lander has——"

"No, no, no! I did not mean——"

"—Settled the question without a doubt: it does not go into the Lake Tchad, but is continued on in the Quorra——"

"No, no!"

"Which discharges itself into the Bight of Benin. Are you thinking of making an expedition into that quarter?" continued Melmont, affecting a ludicrous wonder; "very interesting, doubtless, but somewhat adventurous! You will write your travels, of course!"

Certainly poor Fleming was taken further here than he had bargained for; he knew the pest he spoke of, had travelled from Asia to Europe, but was not prepared to follow it, in the present instance at least, to Africa.

"No, no, my dear sir, we are wandering a little from the point; I was asking about the progress of the cholera."

"Oh, I beg your pardon!—a thousand par-

dons—the progress of Collins the stock-broker.—Oh, a very bad one!—he's ruined!—he's a bankrupt!—he was always a *mauvais sujet!*—his progress was like the Rake's progress!—he's gone to the dogs!—there's an end of him!—no one remembers him!—*fuit Ilium*!—he's numbered with those that were! and are no more!—— sad fellow, that Collins!"

"My dear sir, it's very odd I cannot make you catch my words. I asked you to give me a little account of the chole——"

"Give you a little cauliflower! God bless me—I couldn't imagine what you were asking for. Bring me Mr. Fleming's plate. I beg ten thousand pardons!"

"Oh dear! dear!" said the discomfited Fleming to himself, despairing of eliciting anything on his favourite topics, "well, I suppose I must follow his subject, if he won't follow

mine;" when, addressing Melmont, he continued,

"No, I thank you, no cauliflower for me: if you wish to give me the disorder which I dread so, that is the very thing to occasion it!"

"Oh no! Art thou scared, Mr. Fleming, by this death-in-the-pot phantom! Fye, sir, fye! Have a stout heart, and with this and a stout constitution you may attack cauliflower and the whole vegetable family with impunity! What! do you consider every innocent potato is an ambuscade for this ugly exotic to pop out of, and strangle you! Pshaw, pshaw!"

"You're right, Misther Melmont, you're right, there's no harm in a potat*y*!" interposed O'Callaghan, delighted to hear the favourite vegetable of his native bogs vindicated amongst others. Melmont continued his raillery.

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to depart without a promise that he would dine again the next day, or day after, with his friends at the Priory; and as we may have a chance of introducing to the reader a new oddity or two, for our hero to "show up," as it is called, we shall not permit him to decline the invitation. Before he went away, he informed Mrs. Angus that the Lentworths were going to take a trip to the beautiful village of Birdlip, and asked her to accompany them, in which she willingly complied: the trip was fixed for a day or two hence.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HUMOURS OF A "TABLE D'HOTE" CONTINUED.

Et que sans les conventions faites entre les hommes, la loi de nature ne serait presque jamais qu'un brigandage

consists in? Without malice and envy, and the jaundiced eye and the creeping petty spirit, should we know what are the attributes of magnanimity and disinterestedness,—a noble soul confiding in its own loftiness and purity,—and the generous spirit that scorns and nauseates the "*nigræ succum loliginis?*" No, to be sure not! Well, then, if things are known only by contrast, and as we are indebted to evil for good, why this forces us to acknowledge the paradox of evil being positively a good! and the 'bright' and the 'clever,' and the animating particle of the social atmosphere, is hence also indebted for its light—for the very fount of its coruscations—to the vacant obscurity of those it dazzles by its rays: hence another paradox—that this darkness is actually the source of light! In this sentiment, which cursorily, we think, escaped the lips of our hero once before, some little time ago, at

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to the lighter and brighter portion of society, which we have already declared to be absolutely necessary to enable us to get at, or know what is this lighter and brighter portion.

The two worthies we are now to introduce to the reader, were, doubtless, a most respectable pair; and if a portrait is required of them to place them better before the reader, we shall observe that, like the magnanimous Tydeus, they were both of them small in stature,—how far magnanimous in soul, as Tydeus is represented to have been, we will not stay to discuss: one of these gentlemen was remarkable for wearing his hair, which was a very brilliant red, in straight strings over a very huge and disproportioned head, similar to the fashion of Hugh Strap, hanging down like a pound of candles or rat tails: the other gentleman's hair was black, his head equally disproportioned to his stature: the name of one, was Mr. Holofernes Mogg, this

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solitary state of existence. Such were the mental characteristics of the gentleman our hero designated, for convenience' sake, the 'red dwarf,' but whom we call Mr. Mogg, or Mr. Holofernes Mogg. Mr. Grubbins, (or the 'black dwarf,') was famous, on his part, for having two opinions on most subjects and never being able to come to a conclusion on either,—being much in the situation (as the discerning reader will perceive) of the donkey between two bundles of hay,—in which tantalising and puzzling situation it is said, that, the attraction on either side drawing him with equal potency both to the right and left, the long-eared wonderer will stand at a nonplus, straight in the middle, without turning to either.

The convivial party at the Priory lost nothing in amusement by this change in the seasoning of its intellectual entertainment at the table

d'hôte: it so happened, that Melmont, who was true to his engagement to dine there this day, was honoured by these two philosophers in their addressing him, in particular, as worthiest their notice. The same day, also, which added the importation of these sages, exhibited, moreover, the addition of two of the fairer sex, whom we mention in particular, as they attracted the notice of our discerning philosophers: one of these good women talked much, and was unhappily afflicted with St. Vitus's dance: she principally attracted the attention of Mr. Mogg, who seemed to admire her as an eccentricity and genius: in sooth, she would have made a congenial helpmate for him in the world of solitude, where he (according to Rousseau) would gladly have retired to philosophise: eccentric indeed was she! different from any thing sublunary in the shape of woman he (or any

one else,) had yet, set eyes on! she had a singular way, which doubtless had charms for him, of running on, when she spoke, into long tirades till she was out of breath, much in the way that one of the inspired pupils of the late Edward Irving has been described as doing, when giving vent to the effusions of the "divine oracle." This "*afflatus*," we remember, was said to declare itself in certain "unknown tongues," or gibberish, through the mouths of some "saintly few," — we may add, saintly hypocrites and blasphemers,—and trust indeed they were "few." If the lady we have just described possessed an agreeable singularity of manner and delivery, the other fair one we mentioned, was no less interesting in a different way, —nay, in an entirely opposite way; she scarcely ever said any thing,—and when she did, it was uttered in so low a tone that there never was

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site offered him some of a dish before him; but, before the philosopher could make up his mind as to eating it, it was all 'helped' and sent away in other directions. This may appear a little of a caricature, but it is impossible to speak in measured or moderate terms of what are—perhaps sometimes morbid eccentricities—but often, mere impertinences and conceits of those who suffer their inane and ridiculous vanity, (for this is the principle,) to make them singular, quizzical, and boring, for the sake of acquiring something like the reputation of being 'characters,'—for the lack of any juster claim to be held in consideration! We are, therefore, strongly inclined to suspect that most, or a great proportion of the oddities, as they are called, (and certainly fools and bores, one too often meets,) are impelled to be so, from the weak motive we have expressed. We may, perhaps, thank them for this, for they attain the end of

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"Whatever you like," said Melmont. But here again, before the philosopher could come to a satisfactory conclusion as to which was best for him—hock, sherry, or any other wine,—Melmont had drunk wine with Mrs. Angus—and, perhaps, two or three other persons besides. If this, again, is considered a caricature, we repeat we are glad thus to mark the absurdity of character before us, and purposely wish to exhibit it strongly. Our attention, however, is here called to another part of the table, where our compassion will at least be as much excited.

Melmont was conversing with Mr. Grubbins without being able to bring him to a conclusion on anything, when their conversation was interrupted by a somewhat shrill clamour in another direction, lower down the table. Our hero, looking to see the quarter whence it proceeded, perceived the lady (whom we spoke

of as a patient labouring under St. Vitus's dance, but whom Melmont pronounced to be a little what is good-humouredly called 'cracked,') holding forth with great warmth of interest and much energy of action (worthy of the dance of St. Vitus) on the hardship and injustice of ladies not being permitted to have votes at elections (a subject which has been lately complained of by other ladies as well as herself),—nay, even seats in parliament, or in a jury-box! Melmont had repeatedly heard in these times, when intellect and reform have marched so far, of women being inspired by political enthusiasm to demand taking a part in public matters (as in the instance of a certain clever lady—at Leeds, we think), but never had he seen so glorious an instance of animation on this subject as in the heroine now present. Being willing to humour her whim, he politely approached her after dinner,

and tendered his services to draw up a petition to parliament for her himself, on all the interesting topics she had so warmly launched out upon in behalf of her ill-used sex. But if Melmont was amused with this sage petticoat politician, her admirer, Mr. Holofernes Mogg, was transported with wonder and admiration at her 'astonishing talents and public spirit,' as far as the 'feminine public' were concerned; and surely the 'masculine public' too,—which portion is far too gallant and submissive to the other, not to acquiesce in, praise, and promote any measure for the aggrandisement of the fairer portion of the community. The ladies declare that the reason the manly part of society will not admit them into a participation of public affairs, is, because it dreads the superiority of their talent, of which it is jealous,—and fearful, if once they are permitted

to take a part in public affairs, they will be in the sovereignty here, as they now are in matters of private and domestic life. This may be all very true, and is a very fair compliment to a very 'fair subject.' The admirer of our present lady politician was perhaps (being as vain as he was dull) a little jealous of the gleams of talent and energy she exhibited; and, so, being determined not to be outdone by her, he commenced launching forth, with quadrupled volubility and warmth, on all his favourite liberal topics,—considering that a fair opportunity had been afforded him for the expression of his sentiments, and a clue offered to wandering through the whole labyrinth of his 'liberal' absurdities.

Accordingly he commenced indulging in his favourite invectives against the folly and cruelty of establishing a set of artificial exclusions and

mortifications to a great part of the community, by adopting a scale of ranks which only pampered and flattered the vanity of a comparative few. Of course this cause of lamentation was not unaccompanied with that of declaring the injustice also of inequality of goods and possessions,—together with many other such absurd frantic sallies, which have been refuted a thousand thousand times with renewed force and multiplied ridicule.

When this orator had pretty well exhausted the strength of his lungs, Melmont, who had sat a silent listener, and had heard his harangue with ineffable contempt, now addressed himself to Mrs. Angus, who sat next him, loud enough to be heard by the drivelling politician who had just been exposing himself.

"How amusing it is," said our hero, "to hear people who have no knowledge of the

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female advocate for juries and senators of the fairer sex. Mrs. Angus on this point could not help remarking to our hero—

"Do you not think," she said, somewhat sarcastically, "it would be rather morally improper for ladies to find themselves mixed up with a society of gentlemen in a public debate?—it would surely be setting propriety very much at defiance."

"Imagine," said Melmont, laughing, "the agreeable change in the dulness of situation a jury must find itself in, on being locked up all night—how pleasant the relief of a party of ladies!"

"I fear we ladies," replied Mrs. Angus, "with the best intention to better things and at the same time vindicate our own dignity in the moral scale, must leave the field of politics and judicial inquiry to your sex. I think our vanity

and the wish for sovereignty (as Chaucer's, and Dryden's * story after his, say we possess) are sufficiently gratified by our taking the lead in all private matters; we may be satisfied with being at the head of all establishments within doors. As for public drudgery, we need not envy you men the trouble."

"I think not, indeed. You have uttered more sense," continued Melmont, "in what you have just said than all the frenzied upholders of altering the established forms of society were ever capable of comprehending."

"Frenzied! do you consider those conscientious persons, who would wish to better things and remedy abuses?" asked Mr. Mogg, a little piqued.

"Yes," replied Melmont, "frenzied I call them—most frenzied: not one of them compre-

* See Wife of Bathe's Tale.

hends, in the first place, how things really and practically stand,—therefore he is not competent to judge how they may be bettered. I grant you he can make them a great deal worse by disjointing them on the lever of some absurd theory."

"I am inclined to think," said the dwarfish Rufus, "that the man you call frenzied is no more so than those who differ from him, perhaps."

Melmont smiled to see the little *savant* piqued, and remarked coolly—

"What you say amounts precisely to the corroboration of my argument, that the idle theorist is crazy; for, according to the common saying, the madman answers, exactly as you have answered for him; when he is charged with being mad, he answers by a '*tu quoque*'—he calls you 'the same.' I will grant you thus

far, however, that the world in its mutual criminations too much copies the example of the madman; for one half of it is never happy but when it is railing at the other as frantic or foolish. Again, however, I maintain that the man who would think according to the opinion of things you have laid down, would be really frenzied; he prates about things, I aver, of which he does not fully understand the merits, or their bearings on social happiness; he crams his head into his mine of absurdity, and thinks himself diving into a mine of moral wealth,—much as the simple ostrich crams its head into the sand fancying itself safe,—and because it does not itself see the assailibility from without which it presents, believes itself unassailable!"

Mr. Jochabed Grubbins here interposed, but to no other effect than solemnly to declare, "he could as yet come to no conclusion on the sub-

ject, his mind not being made up, and as he desired our hero to assist him in this object, Melmont accordingly proceeded to oblige him.

"You can't make up your mind, you say, which is the best—the present organisation of society in the rule of ranks, and the unequal, yet more advantageous, distribution of possessions,—or, on the other hand, uniform equality? You say you can't tell which of these to prefer?"

The little gentleman shook his head—he was no nearer a conclusion.

"Well, then," said Melmont, "I will tell you first of all, there can be no such thing as this uniform equality,—as I will explain; and I should really consider it a useless waste of breath to say a word on the subject, unless it were that in this time of excitement, as in former ones, there are many infatuated wretches crying

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fore, cannot have all men equal, and if all these different causes make one man so much higher or lower than another, what difference, in fact and reality, does a mere variety of nomenclature, such as exists in the distinguishing appellations of ranks and titles, make after all? In America—in a republic—the same difference, in effect, exists of divisions and degrees in society as with us in a monarchy, only, what is better with us,—life is embellished and manners more exalted—we have a great deal more of the essence of good and highly civilised breeding, which is assumed (and often burlesqued) there, —and which they, the citizens of the republic, would gladly affect to have, but which cannot exist without that superior character given to society by grades of distinction, and the manners of a court. It may be observed, too, how much more agreeably *individually*—as well as

more worthy of a civilised age, it is—that the respect due to any social ascendency should be offered to something more exalted than the sordid claim of mere moneyed importance—as must be very much the case in America: besides, in a state where there are no ranks, no degrees of honour, nor any admitted 'scale of precedence,' the tendency is—that all, being equals, feel conscious of a stubborn pride, and an indisposition to bend or give way to each other,—the natural, as well as probable, consequence of which is—a want of sociability and affable demeanour, and a degeneracy into rudeness, vulgarity, and savageness. Why not,—if you must have the fabric of society formed in different stories,—why not also put the decorations that embellish it, and render it most agreeable to look at as well as inhabit? If it is to be in different stories, one higher than the other, the only difference a little embellish-

ment makes, is to improve and beautify the fabric! It alters not essentially its structure at all! Why not, I repeat then, since such is the case, give the ornament that adds charm to the thing itself? The case is so plain, that it is not worth while, except in addressing the most besotted for the abolition of ranks, to waste one's breath more upon it. If, however, I were asked, what state and manners of life were best for men to dwell in, I should say, in that state which demanded good breeding, as the principle of its social intercourse. This is mainly gained by a system of ranks, which require proper and decent form; politeness—courtesy—even ceremony—which is all good, although artificial. Why good? you may ask—because it fosters and keeps alive a spirit of forbearance, which harmonises and softens man, renders him better as well as more agreeable, and approaches to

the principle of Christianity itself;—to do and to say what is most agreeable to those about us, (I speak generally);—to contribute as much as we can in making those about us pleased, at ease, and happy; and in forbearing, on the other hand, from doing or saying that which is, on the contrary, painful, rude, galling, disgusting, and disagreeable. I say there is no doubt that a state of society, mainly fostering this principle, is the condition where the greatest share of happiness is likely to be compassed and enjoyed—and such a state is our own."

If this was, perhaps, rather a long expression of opinion on the part of our hero, the party present, by the attention, and, indeed, willingness with which they listened, did not indicate that they thought it too protracted, or unnecessarily so, after the silly tirades that had been ventilated on the opposite side of the question.

On the contrary, our hero was rather complimented than otherwise for having placed the subject in so fair, as well as just a light, and for rescuing it from the vulgar, narrow, *a priori* constructions, that mean and shallow minds alone can address themselves to and understand. The approbation yielded to Melmont, whose voice had been alone listened to, was felt as a reproof by the dwarfish Rufus, whose opinions were thus indirectly answered. He remained gaping, as our hero spoke, and had not the assurance to cackle out any objection. So much ascendancy has not only superior argument, but superior refinement of mind and polished taste, over the baser intellectual and moral standard —as much as the brilliancy of the pure metal puts to shame the vulgar glittering of the burnished dross—the dirty *clinquant!*

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TRIP TO BIRDLIP—NEW ADVENTURES.

And so they rode along, beguiling the time with various conceits, when an accident befel the knight, which this sage history will forthwith disclose.

DON QUIXOTE.

IT was to-day that the jaunt to the interesting village called Birdlip was agreed upon. Melmont and his lady preferred riding. They were accompanied on the present occasion by Mrs. Angus; the Count Vasari was to have

been of the party, but was detained by indisposition. As for Lady Lentworth and Sir Jasper, they were contented with occupying the britchka, which, being open, they had a good view of the interesting scenery and extent of valley seen from the brow of the hill, along which the road winds. The equestrians sometimes rode up to the carriage side, and conversed with them; at others, lagged behind, looking at the scenery, and then again cantered forward. As they turned into the road that led up the hill towards Birdlip, they fell in with the gallant Hibernian, O'Callaghan, prancing on a stiff, hot-headed, hard-mouthed, high-hipped, snorting, rough, Irish steed, of a dun colour, that a brother of the Emerald Isle had lent him. He was going in the same direction, accompanied by Mr. Holofernes Mogg and Mr. Jochabed Grubbins, those 'red and black' brethren of dwarfish proportions, who

were in a large open fly, and sate *vis-à-vis*, in pairs, with the cracked governess (for such she was) and the lady difficult of being heard. The Hibernian greeted Melmont and Mrs. Angus, informing them, he together with the "ladies and gentlemen" in the fly were going the same road as themselves. Melmont was not particularly happy to hear this piece of intelligence; however, there was no alternative—so the two parties, one in the train of the other, may be said to have joined forces, and to have formed one single cavalcade.

They now began the ascent of the hill, towards that beautiful eminence called Birdlip. It commands an extensive view of a splendid panorama of wood and valley: this is enjoyed, though in a less degree, the whole way up the hill; from beneath,—the road appears, as you go up the ascent, like a great

snake, stretching itself out to bask on the bank side.

The conversation proceeded in the different coteries, according to their respective tastes. Mr. Jochabed Grubbins did not know which to consider the finest view,—that on his right, or on his left,—and so came to no conclusion, as usual. The lady he admired, was asked what she thought of the prospect, but answered, according to her wont, in so low a tone, that it was yet a matter of uncertainty whether she had even seen what she was asked about or not: her prudence was silently admired by her stumpy gallant with the sable locks.

To go from this pair of originals to the couple little less absurd, that shared the vehicle with them—these two conversed together in most animated strain, as usual, and enjoyed the high key of the respective harmonies they de-

lighted to awaken—harmonies, that is, in their own estimation, doubtless — albeit, uttered in accents inharmonious—the gentleman's being a kind of grunt, the accentuation not at all embellished by the effect produced by a prodigious under jaw, combined with a kind of snort; while the lady was so shrill that Echo must have had a nervous attack, or her teeth set on edge at least, to have heard her abodes so shrilly challenged.

Melmont rode between Alice and Mrs. Angus, by the side of the latter of which persons the gallant O'Callaghan capered on his raw-boned Irish charger, pointing out with amazing zeal and officiousness the beauty and extent of the scenery, so that the object of his affections might lose no jot of information which could render her ride interesting; while she, ungrateful dame (having a sufficiently intelligent cicerone

in Melmont), wished him as distant as the furthest object he pointed out.

Melmont and his fair companions were conversing on such indifferent subjects as the character of this or that person—the marriage of such a one—the death of another—with now and then a remark of a more general application: we will take up their conversation, where we happen, casually, to fall in with it.

"I think a married state the happiest and most reputable that a man can adopt," said Melmont.

"Do all young men of your age think so?" said Alice, smiling.

"Why, no! I think there would be a hundred to one against me! They talk of the 'shackles' of matrimony; and this perhaps is true—speaking previously to the age of about five or six-and-twenty; but at this limit, often, there is such

a habit of restlessness of mind, of unfixed affections, of selfishness,—that is, mere love of self,—contracted, that I think the best thing to reform a man, and make a happier as well as more dignified being of him, is to link him with one between whom his affections may be somewhat divided,—who will take away the whole monopoly of his interest for himself merely; he will, also, make a more respectable member of society, as having a more decided character to support,—as the head of a family or establishment,—than when loose, unhinged, and wandering about on the community. This is my feeling as to the merits and advantages of matrimony to a man, both in a moral and social point of view; at the same time I know that this doctrine cannot always be carried into practice, from want of circumstances to render the married condition happy, in this very artificial state of existence. And you will say,

again, that the age I have named for marriage (which I will now fix as some time between six-and-twenty and thirty) is rather early: I will grant that it is; and I will grant further that the prospect of being thus early burdened with a family of children is not very delightful. As far as matrimonial cares are concerned, this is all quite true: it exhibits an evil taken in this light; but then I maintain, that though an evil, it still is a less evil to society, and to the man himself, than to live in the unhinged, unattached manner I have warned him to shun—to make himself despicable by the contraction of a certain habit of selfishness, and perhaps to live on to become a wretched fogrum of an old bachelor. In fact, there being but a choice of evils in everything, moral or political, I think, of the two evils, the married state, (even, at the somewhat early age I mention) is the least, in a moral and social point of view, to the individual, and to the society of which he is a

member. This is the precise aspect, assuredly, in which true philosophy would regard the question; and if Plato himself were here writing laws for society, you would see he would subscribe to my doctrine."

Melmont's companions expressed their concurrence, on the whole, in his sentiments, and Alice remarked, while she smiled, that by what she had observed since she had been at Cheltenham, there were many ladies who would doubtless subscribe to his doctrine, and would not care how soon they could rescue any gentleman of the age he mentioned from the contraction of those degrading and selfish habits he so justly deprecated. Melmont smiled in turn, and gave his fair companion credit for her just and delicate irony, while he answered,

"Yes, indeed, I agree with you! In fact, we younger men are placed in rather an embarrassing situation; for, there being so many ladies

as it were 'agog' for forming matrimonial connections at such decidedly 'marrying places' as this, for instance, is,—it happens that if a man pays any attention to a lady he is introduced to, she is almost sure to interpret it into an inclination on his part to commence some more serious negociation!"

"It is indeed a dangerous predicament," said Mrs. Angus, "and puts me in mind of the sort of traps laid for matrimony in the Scotch mode of carrying on these matters!"

"Yes," said Melmont; "a person has often, in no great earnestness, said to a lady something about marriage, and if in the hearing of one or two meddling or intriguing individuals. lo! and behold! he finds he has actually fallen into a contract of marriage duly attested by the presence of witnesses!"

"Such an unguarded talker as Harry——

would be sure to fall into some such predicament as this, if there were any serious intention of entrapping him," remarked Mrs. Angus.

"Poor Harry! Yes, he never thinks about what he says; he is a great talker, but I don't consider him a shallow man, for all that."

"Oh no, *au contraire*," said Alice.

"Certainly not!" said Mrs. Angus; "but why should you remark that?"

"Because you will invariably find the malicious and dull rail at men who talk a good deal as 'shallow;' this they lay down as a universal rule: now, though it is true in some instances, nay, in many, it is certainly not so in all. What would be the benefit or entertainment to society of a learned, a witty, a clever, or, an eloquent man, if he held his tongue? It is from the stores of his talent and information,

that he pours forth the flood of his eloquence and remark; it is, in fact, as true that great talkers are clever men as that they are shallow; but from the malicious misrepresentation of the hypothesis I have just mentioned, many clever and enlightened men, of wit and endless knowledge, have been proscribed as 'shallow!'"

With these and other such remarks and reflections the *trio* rode on, every now and then pausing to enjoy the beauty of the prospect round them. As Melmont looked at Alice, he thought he had never seen her appear so lovely; the wind was sporting with the beautiful auburn ringlets which waved over her brow; the soft tints of her cheek rendered more lovely by the heightened glow that exercise had lit up in them; her figure too, at all times seen with admiration, appeared with an enhanced grace in the equestrian guise,

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decay and corruption below: this was proved by the eccentric quartetto in the 'fly' that followed in the wake of the equestrians, which quartetto was made up of a race of individuals, vulgar enough to provide themselves with gooseberries and such rubbish when offered in this hedge-repast way. Melmont flung the brats a sixpence to scramble for, which they did, helter-skelter, upsetting each other and the fruit they carried as well—pell mell. If the noise had been discordant of this urchin group before, it was doubly so now; so much so, that the steeds of the equestrian party showed strong signs of alarm and restiveness, most especially the Irish charger which the hero O'Callaghan bestrode: the other horses were kept quiet by the management of the riders, but not so the Hibernian steed! The ascent had now been gained, and the party was going down

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ran to the assistance of O'Callaghan, picked him up and unbuttoned his coat, and took off his neckcloth or stock, amid the condolence of the whole party. Every one was pleased to find that the Irishman had been only a little shaken; that his fall had chiefly affected his head, which was fortunately so thick, that no injury had been sustained. The fallen man was soon on his legs again, and came to himself, to swear at his steed, perhaps, more than thank his friends for their assistance, for (alack, and alas!) the secret history of his wearing such tremendous collars was now discovered!—it was, that he might compensate by height of gills for want of body! Unconscious was he of the article denominated "shirt!" as was apparent when Melmont, in order that he might breathe freely, had ripped open his tightly-buttoned coat, which was always hermetically closed up to the throat.

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body' wardrobe afforded: however, this would have wounded the delicacy of the Irishman, perhaps, (had it been offered even at a subsequent period, and in the most delicate manner,) so Sir Jasper gave up the thought of it. The offering a real benefit sometimes to a sensitive and proud man, is offering him, frequently, what he considers the bitterest insult! Witness the old story of Dr. Johnson, at Pembroke College, and his flinging the shoes down stairs which were left for him to wear. We are willing to consider O'Callaghan in a high point of view as a sensitive man; which is but fair, since we have witnessed him in the low point of view in which his refractory steed had placed him! Two peasants managed to catch the steed, which was by this time pretty well knocked up, and permitted its rider to remount him, though with the precaution of a tightened curb, after which

the beast behaved himself better, O'Callaghan vowing, by St. Patrick, he would have him shot if he played him such a trick again.

"Arrah! I don't admire yir policy," cried the Irishman, as he reasoned with the offending beast on the late rebellion. With respect to O'Callaghan's sensitiveness, we ought here just to say, that he had felt very deeply discomfited by Melmont's exposure of his deficiency of wardrobe, though done with the most innocent and kind intentions. What the consequences of this pique might be, it is not for us, at present, to determine: it must be left for time to show. If the object of his admiration, Mrs. Angus, had not been present to witness the exposure of his discomfiture, the gallant Hibernian would, perhaps, have thought less of it; at present.... no matter!

Misfortunes, they say, never come single,

and so it happened in the instance which it is now the painful duty of our sage history to record. It so happened, that just as the whole cavalcade were now wheeling into the village of Birdlip, at the awkward angle where the turnpike gave admittance, that the driver of the fly (which conveyed the quartetto in the rear), from some inadvertence or another, drove the vehicle violently up against the gatepost, completing the subversion of the parties inside, just as two of them, *viz.* Mr. Holofernes Mogg and the flighty lady, had settled on the subversion, as usual, of all ranks and orders in society —according to their 'policy,' as O'Callaghan would say. The concussion was tremendous! The heads of the two dwarfish gentlemen were banged together most terrifically! — red-pole *versus* black-nob! playing a game of *rouge et noir*, in which neither of the parties could be

said to be much of gainers—unless in respect of gaining each a tremendous bump on the numskull or mazzard, that Gall and Spurzheim would have attributed some astonishing qualities to, had a cast of the bump been offered them for inspection! In addition to the bump established on Mr. Jochabed Grubbins' mazzard, he had to boast of the additional beauty of a black eye, which corresponded well with those locks we have already shown to be so black as to give the wearer the appropriate nickname of the Black Dwarf; on the other hand, the 'small gentleman in red' found that his under jaw had become minus three teeth, adding to the proofs of the battering-ram powers of his dark friend's bullet of a head. Here, again, a corresponding feature of beauty was afforded; for the blood that spouted from his nose and jaws kept in countenance the red

honours of that numskull, which in like manner gave an appropriate nickname to its possessor. The flighty lady, whom we have conjectured to be some cracked governess, perhaps,—screamed aloud, as her Leghorn came in contact — or conflict — with that of the low-voiced nymph opposite her, who now, at least, if she never did before, found a tongue, and cried out lustily. The whole quartetto was in a woful pickle or plight! the parties being thrown pell-mell against and over each other in helpless condition. A window of the fly was dashed to pieces, besides a pannel knocked in, the splinters of which nearly broke the shin of Mr. Holofernes Mogg, who had the additional benefit of being next to it.

Melmont was most active, in spite of laughing ready to burst, (or rather in spite of the propensity to do so, which he suppressed with consider-

from this limbo in good time, for
somewhat frightened, commen
volley of kicking, by which he
and forced his 'delicate heel' th
pannel of the vehicle, and was
panned for some little time, till
way out again by widening the
he had kicked through to get in
was sent, thus mauled, to a carp
the assistance of a smith into
was put into something like condit
the journey, with the exception th
still remained broken. This was
it was nothing more than the co
heads of two, at least, of the parti
if the two remaining ones were

why it was all in strict concordance—a crazy, broken-down piece of business altogether! it is as well to make the best of things, in all cases, no matter how lamely!

Sir Jasper and Lady L., with, Alice, Mrs. Angus, and O'Callaghan, stayed in the village for some little time, for the sake of admiring the view; this delay, too, gave time for the repair of the fly. At length, the whole cavalcade resumed its route forwards from Birdlip, to visit the Swiss cottages and Roman pavement. As for Melmont, we must see what became of him in the next chapter.

END OF VOL. II.

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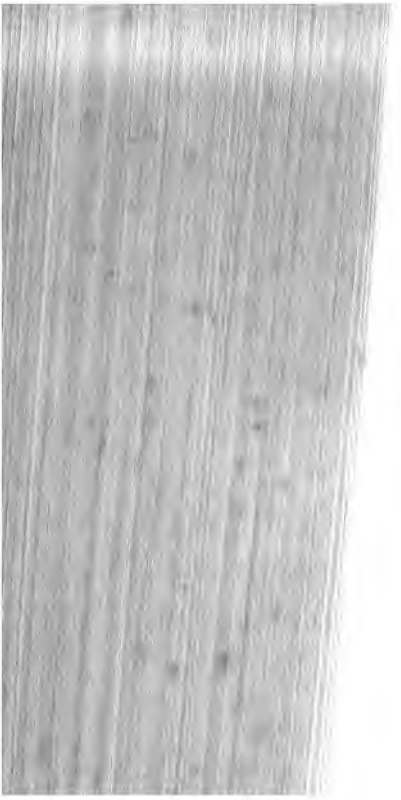

OUT OF TOWN;

OR,

THE RECESS.

OUT OF TOWN;

OR,

THE RECESS.

CONTAINING

PASSAGES OF THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF ARTHUR MELMONT.

This above all—to thine own self be true.

HAMLET.

Ridentis speciem dabit et torquebitur idem.

HORACE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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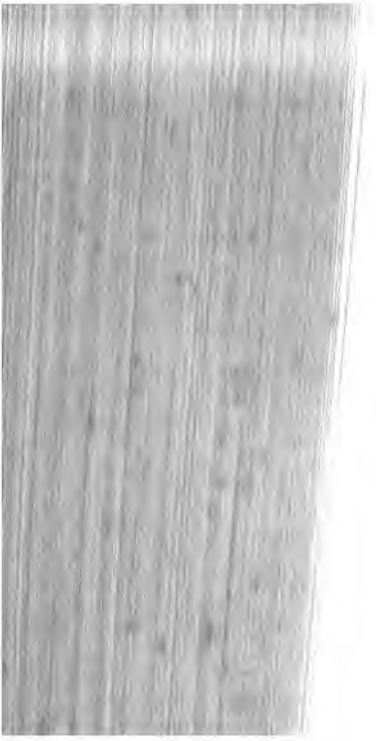


OUT OF TOWN;

OR,

THE RECESS.

CHAPTER I.

A DISCOVERY.

Als wir vom Hügel hinuntergingen, hörte ich einen Gesang, der aus der Hütte zu kommen schien.

L. Tieck.

During the period of the delay for the purpose of repairing the 'fly,' the party walked about the village, admiring the views it commanded in different directions from the eminence.

OUT OF TOWN;

OR,

THE RECESS.

"That I can't tell you, sir."

"Well then, go in, and say, that if the gentleman's name is Lavotin, his old friend Melmont would be happy to see him."

The old woman did not return alone;—the stranger had, indeed, overheard this charge on the part of Melmont. The guitar had dropped from his hand, and he rushed out to meet his friend, who had by this time dismounted from his horse, and had hung the bridle over the pales in front of the cottage. The friends instantly recognised each other, and embraced.

"Lavotin!" exclaimed Melmont, the first to speak; "can it be you that I see here! What miracle has brought you to this spot? so far from your own country—like a troubadour—a wanderer from home, consoling yourself with a guitar in a lonely retreat like this?"

"Alas! Melmont, the tale is rather a long

one and somewhat painful. No wonder you are surprised at seeing me here, and in this humble dwelling; as for me, I have ceased to be surprised at this, or any adverse fortune I may be doomed to endure! I cannot suffer much worse than I have already endured, that is my only bitter consolation."

"Oh, do not talk in this sad strain of despondence; rally—rally your spirits!—at least while I happen to be near you, and call myself your friend, you shall not have reason to say you have no better consolation than such a sorry one as you mention! Besides, whatever may be the causes of your distress, they may yet be relieved! . . . . But tell me—your Fornarina . . . . how is she? I long to know!—so lovely was she—so amiable . . . ."

Lavotin could only answer, at first, by the tears that forced themselves from his eyes.

"Forgive this weakness," he said, at length, "but when you hear all I have to tell you about the person you inquire after, while she yet lived . . . ."

"What do I hear . . . . is she then no more?"

Melmont remained silent for a moment or two, as the friends sat opposite each other in the humble room occupied by Lavotin, which they had by this time entered. There was a miniature of the person whose loss was so sensibly regretted by both the friends, lying on a little oaken table,—the guitar Melmont had just heard, was flung carelessly on the ground by some books and manuscripts;—these had formed the consolation of one who was an exile from the bosom of his home and friends.

Before Lavotin proceeded to relate his story Melmont remembered that he had left his

party engaged in contemplating the view from the top of the hill; he therefore apologised to his companion, for leaving him an instant whilst he returned to them. Having done this, and recommended them to proceed to the "Swiss cottages" and Roman pavements, a little farther on the road, he returned to Lavotin, having made the excuse to them, that he had fallen in with a person to whom he was obliged to speak, but that he would join them on their way back through the village.

O'Callaghan, by the by, was delighted at finding himself uneclipsed,—as he fancied, now our hero was absent,—and the sole "squire of dames," the beau and cicerone of the party; and, despite his late discomfiture, felt almost as frisky as the mettlesome Irish Rosinante he bestrode; which, however, in order to keep his seat, he kept tightly curbed, and at as

steady a pace as he could. As Melmont bowed to the party on going away, the Hibernian returned his salute very stiffly, and looked after him with a disagreeable grimace, muttering "Bad luck to him!"—confirming our suspicions of some portended rupture between himself and our hero,—of his own seeking, doubtless; but this, time must show.

On Melmont's return, Lavotin proceeded with his story, part of the circumstances of which the reader has already heard in the picture given by this youth, of his misfortunes, in the beginning of our second volume; and to which we beg to refer. It will there be seen, that with these Melmont was already acquainted. The remainder of the story is now to be supplied; and many things, but hinted previously, are, here, to be more fully explained.

"After the unfortunate occurrence," said La-

votin, "of the death of Antonio,—my dearest Fornarina's brother,—from my hand, I was obliged to seek safety by flight, as I need not tell you. I was upheld by the consideration, under this disaster, that he fell in fair combat, and not in the manner that the most base and treacherous of men tried to persuade the world it happened . . . ."

"You allude to the story that your uncle circulated—of your having way-laid Antonio and had him assassinated? Nothing was ever more monstrous! I am a witness to the contrary! In fact, in being your second in that unhappy affair, I am too much a sharer in your guilt—if you have any."

"Happy am I, indeed; it is my only consolation, that I have yet a witness to my innocence and honour. I sought you in London, after coming to England, in the hope of finding you:

I then came to this spot (where I have been but a day or two), having heard that you were in the neighbourhood. As to that encounter, I could not avoid it; the intemperate terms made use of to provoke me, could not be put up with,—and the very last man that I should ever have persuaded myself to raise my hand against, unhappily brought on himself the fatal result:— . . . . I wish it had been my own lot instead of his! . . . . How often have I expressed this to myself in my bitter reflections on the subject!"

"And after your flight from Naples—in which, by the by, I was obliged to follow your example—where did you go to escape the consequences of this sad occurrence? You were known,—I was not; and so merely contented myself with removing from the immediate neighbourhood, though shortly after I returned to England."

"I went home to Florence, at first, in order to lay before my father the whole circumstances of the case. This was my first step, though I purposed leaving Italy as soon as possible after this. My anxious wish was to vindicate myself, but my father's ears were stopped against me by the traducing breath of that basest of men, my uncle, who was determined to ruin me; and, while he set my father against me, wished him no better than he did me,—being actuated by an implacable feeling of hate and envy against our branch of the family."

"How was this?"

"He was of the elder branch, and had succeeded to the family estates; but, from his excessive extravagance and thoughtlessness, he had squandered away all his patrimony, which, by a strange concurrence of circumstances, at length found its way into the hands of my

father, who was of the younger branch of the family. My uncle, from that day, never set foot within the threshold or the domains that had been once his own, without feelings of hate and envy. That he should have been mortified at witnessing in another's hands, what he had lost by his own folly, was natural, but that this feeling should have been cherished into the conception of crime is inexcusable. The secret object of his machinations was now to snatch at some opportunity, if possible, of ruining me—the only son of his brother—of setting my father against me—considering that if he could get me disinherited, the property would revert to himself, supposing he should survive my father, or any son of his, should he have one . . . ."

"I well understand, and cannot but wonder at the stages of baseness into which a desperation of circumstances can gradually seduce

men! But there is one thing you have omitted speaking of, which I am anxious to know—you have imparted to me indeed the bitter intelligence that she is no more — but tell me, what became of Fornarina when you fled from Naples? Did her brother's death set her against you? Was it turned to that effect by her friends? Did she forget her affection? What did her parents do?"

"I was soon about to satisfy you on these points, which in your kindness and interest for me you have anticipated. Alas! it is needless for me to repeat, what I have so often called heaven to witness, in my lonely reflections, on this part especially of the whole circumstances—that I never practised the arts of a seducer in my acquaintance with that loveliest of creatures! I never sought for more encouragement than the love she betrayed for

me inspired! could I behold this affection unmoved, let any man—any young man, sensible of one kindlier impression—ask himself? Could I permit her love to remain unanswered? But here the baseness of my uncle found precisely a subject for his machinations; he was constantly dogging my path, and had suborned his spies to relate to the parents of Fornarina the false inventions of my having attempted to undermine the peace, happiness, and honour of their daughter; 'a baseness,' it was represented, 'more flagrant on my part, she having been betrothed to another.' This was a person whom she did not love, and who was then absent in France. I knew her parents (who were friends of my family), and on my going to their house, as usual, I was surprised and chilled by the forbidding reception given me! I entreated an explanation: I was informed

of the caution given them against me. I stoutly denied the truth of it; I demanded to know who my traducers were;—'they wanted but courage,' I said, 'to be my assassins*.'—It was in vain that I pleaded: I was not listened to—what was my voice against that of so many? I took my leave;—the same evening, however, a billet was brought me from the object of my affections, telling me 'she had herself pleaded my cause, but with as little success as myself:' she added, 'that she was incensed at the cruelty and injustice of her parents; that she was determined to follow the dictates of her own heart, which had been influenced the more in my favour in consequence of the wrong to which I had been

* The words used by Lavotin here, are the animated words of Canning, in his letter challenging the person who had abused him on the subject of Ogden.

subjected; she gave herself voluntarily up to me; she promised to follow me through the world rather than stay and sacrifice herself to a person who could never possess her heart. What could I do? Certainly prudence would have prompted me to admonish Fornarina to recal so precipitate a step — but would she have thanked me for this counsel? Love pleaded as strongly in my heart as in hers; compassion, too, pleaded for her, and increased my tenderness and ardour. It was settled—we fled together to Naples—this was from Rome, where she lived. We remained undiscovered for nearly a year, in which time she blessed me with a little creature that would have been as beautiful as her mother, and who was for a long time my only consolation after Fornarina's loss, but has also been snatched from me by death a short time ago. At length my uncle's spies

discovered the place of my retreat; my father's ears had already been poisoned by his false representations of the circumstances of this unhappy affair; the parents of Fornarina were made acquainted with my place of refuge; the brother, who had now just returned with the person to whom she had been betrothed, came vowing vengeance against me, and threatening to make me expiate my temerity with my life; he took the matter entirely out of the hands of Fornarina's suitor, on whom it ought to have rested—would that it had! He came—it was long before I could be prevailed upon to raise my hand against him: at length, as he was carrying his threats into execution of taking away Fornarina from me (in which part of the affair he was assisted by her intended husband), I could no longer refrain, and was very nearly sacrificing him at once on the

spot. However, I thank God, this affray was broken off, as you know, at this stage of the affair. We met again by the sea shore; on this occasion, you, my friend, were with me. I need not say of what that shore,—yourself,—and my misery, are conscious! On flying back to Florence, as I have said, nothing could prevail on my father to receive or protect me: my mother said all that she could to console and encourage me, and whatever assistance I have had, since the period I speak of, has been transmitted through her kindness; she has indeed been ever willing to believe my statement of the circumstances, as willingly as my father believed that of my uncle, to which my kinder parent warned him, feelingly and repeatedly, against yielding too implicit a credit. Her plea in my behalf was overwhelmed by the

cries of too many, leagued with Lanzi against my cause. I told my mother I had a witness—yourself—of my honour and innocence; she again consoled me; she told me, however, it was better for me to depart from Florence—at present, it would only be exasperating my father to stay. She promised she would never lose sight of me—it is through her kindness, through her assistance, that I have dragged and yet drag on, my existence—wretched indeed—but now, I trust, not altogether without hope, since I have thus fallen in with you. Chance has thrown you in my way; doubtless if you had known where I was, you would, in your generosity of disposition, have already offered me your services in endeavouring to reconcile me with my father."

"Yes, indeed! and often have I thought of you,—often anxiously asked where you had

withdrawn. I could do nothing towards assisting your cause, without your presence and cognizance. I bless heaven again, it may be possible that my presence can now assist you!"

"Yes, indeed!" resumed Lavotin, "I consider the hand of Heaven has guided me thus to cross your path, to find in you my preserver, as you have been my friend! I trust, through your testimony, to be reconciled to my father, who is not a hard-hearted man, though certainly prejudiced and hasty, and too apt to give ear to those who, by first flattering him, can afterwards induce him to give credit to, and approve of, almost anything they may choose to advance with any shadow of plausibility,—especially when grounding their suggestions on a regard for his interests. He has his vanity as other men; but I trust, his natural kind-

ness, which I know he has, — and his reason too,—will yet permit him to see through the mist of prejudice, in which he has been enveloped. Could I induce you to go to Florence with me, to appear the witness of my innocence, you shall ever be repaid by my gratitude! You shall be as a brother to me, and remembered in my prayers as my preserver!"

"What distance is there that I would not traverse — that I would not consider trifling— to assist you, and set you right with a father that, I trust, is not inaccessible to the plea of natural affection and reason?—If the distance were ten times more than it is, I would go!"

At the same time that Melmont spoke this, he said it the more confidently, as he, perhaps, considered it possible that chance might throw Lavotin's father in his way, without going all the way to Florencee. However this may be,

it should seem that our hero's testimony would be of little avail in propitiating the disinclination of his friend's father towards him, unless further assurance of his innocence could be derived from some other source as well, to support it. We must leave the events of the story to bear out what is here surmised. Meantime, Melmont continued,—"But you omitted to let me know what remains to be told concerning Fornarina: you say they took her back to Rome."

"Yes, they took her back—but to retain her for but a short time. They did all they could to make her join with themselves in denouncing me as a villain and a murderer. It was in vain, however, that they made her listen to falsehoods which she repelled with an indignation inspired by the truest attachment; they had torn her from me—and from her child—which was left with me.

and preserved in the hope of, perhaps, some day being able to restore it to its mother, of whom I hoped yet to recover possession; when—(as by clandestine means I endeavoured to find out how and where she was,)—I learned the bitter tidings I have already imparted to you, that she was dead. She languished under her persecution and regret but a short time, and terminated an existence that was a bitter commentary on the cruelty of Circumstance in this world—warping, as it does, the truest and best feelings of the heart from the harmony to which their nature attunes them!—warping them to the discord of misery, which can alone be silenced in the chilling apathy of death!"

CHAPTER II.

THE FRIEND IN NEED—THE FRIEND INDEED

Presence of mind, and courage in distress,
Are more than armies to ensure success.

DRYDEN.

MELMONT, who was all kindness of heart and generosity of spirit, did not leave his friend without again exhorting him to rally his spirits, and yet hope for a time when fortune should make him amends for the unhappiness he had hitherto borne under her frown. He further

made an engagement with Lavotin, that the latter should leave his solitude—if not that day, the next (for it was now growing late)—and return with himself to Cheltenham. "The gaiety of the place will relieve your mind," said Melmont. "You must laugh at Fortune, if you wish to get the better of her; the tyrannical minx only frowns the blacker on you, the more you show yourself awed and distressed by her menaces! '*Hardi! La gaieté porte toujours de bonheur!*' To-morrow I will call and transport you, effects and all, in a carriage I shall come over in, for the express purpose! Think no more of what has happened that is unpleasant—but only believe that it will be relieved! through my agency (I speak sanguinely), it shall! Yes! in a few months we will set off together to Florence, and bring your father to reason, unless," he added, significantly, "any

chance should possibly throw him in our way sooner." With these words of encouragement, Melmont shook his friend warmly by the hand, and took his leave to regain his party, which by this time he expected to meet on their return through Birdlip, from their "exploration," or "lionising," whichever term it "best beseemeth" the reader to adopt.

On Melmont's leaving the cottage, and looking for his horse, which he had left by the pales in front of the little garden at the entrance, he saw a person leading it up and down, whose features he fancied he had previously seen. However, the fellow seemed determined to disguise them, if possible, and make the recognition difficult. A huge blue neck-cloth came up above his chin, almost to his under lip, while his cap (a shabby *bonnet de voyage*) was slouched over his eyes, over one

of which he wore a patch: he had a pair of moustaches, and his dress was that of a courier —blue jacket and trousers. As Melmont approached to mount his horse, the man proceeded to hold the stirrup for him, making a reverence in a ludicrous style, worthy an Italian buffoon, accompanying it with an address in the following style.

"God bless your honour, and all good people!—that is, people who have it in their power to do good, and have the will too to exert that power!—There are not many such in this good-for-nothing world, made up, as it is, of *maroufles*, *pendards*, *fanfarons*, tyrants, bullies, turncoats, and hypocrites!.... Not many, sir, not many! —'*apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto*,' as the poet has it, and as we used to say at the grammar-school of——"

"Grammar-school!" said Melmont to him-

self; "surely I must know this bird by its note —pray, what is your name, my man?"

"My name, sir? Oh, sir, one, I flatter myself, I need not be ashamed to own! I've made myself a name, sir,—yet, you'll doubtless say, with the poet—What's in a name? *I* say there's a great deal in a name—it goes a great way in this world; but it's a difficult thing first of all to establish one."

"What—for knavery?" interrupted Melmont, smiling and looking suspiciously at the same time, as having detected who the "waggish" character (as it is called), that was affording him this impertinent rigmarole, was. "I would venture to wager," he continued, "I know that thy 'name,' varlet, was established easily enough, if it be not difficult to coin one for knavery!"

"You do me too great honour, sir—I hand

equidem tali me dignor honore.'—You seem to know more of me than I know of myself . . . . . if so, sir, I trust I may be allowed in return to boast that I know as much of you, as you do of yourself!—*ecce signum!*—if I were to ask your honour's honour how a certain engaging widow lady doth, I might——" (This was an allusion to its being originally reported that Melmont had intended making overtures to Mrs. Angus, which, by-the-by, he had, perhaps, once thought of),

"—Deserve a horse-whipping, knave," said Melmont, shaking his whip over this prating fellow's head. "Off with thy patch, man, unslouch thy hat, and pull down from thy chin that muffle of a handkerchief, and show me the undisguised effigies of that most impudent of varlets (not excepting the knave Fleuret), hight Bob Restamy! Show thyself, I say, and say what thou dost here!"

The transformation was made as quickly as if the words that commanded it had been uttered by a wizard! In his undisguised impudence stood Bob Restamy himself before our hero, and, making a low bow, expressed himself sensible of the compliment paid him, by being discovered by his 'style,' which distinction, he said, he shared in common with all superior geniuses, who were, more or less, all mannerists, from Virgil down to Byron, after which sauce of compliment to himself, laid on with more than his usual complacence, he proceeded—

"You see before you, sir, a pattern of fidelity; in this identical Bob Restamy you have discovered in me by the aforesaid distinguished attribute of my style—a very '*fidus Achates*' am I! but who is my '*Æneas?*'—that you must know to be no other than the young Count Gustavo," (for such was the real name of Lavotin,)—"my old master, and your old friend,

whom you have seen not long since, and hope long to see again! So do I, sir; so do I—there is a pleasure, sir, in contemplating sympathies,—in seeing one's own feelings reflected in others! and I, accordingly, and for this reason, honour you, sir, in the present instance——"

"Impudent knave!"

"Excuse these few words, sir, to express my warmth of heart, *pauca verba*, sir—I've done on this affecting topic: but can I say less with consistency, when I inform you, that the moment I heard the Count had set foot on British ground, all the affection of an old servant (and a favoured servant) for his master returned; and off I set to offer my services again to my quondam master. I found him—I followed him, as you see, sir, to this spot."

"What, then, you did not run away from Cheltenham because you were bankrupt."

"Bankrupt, sir! Gracious! With my disin-

terested disposition, can you imagine I should have left my business if it were not to be rather a loser in the cause of fidelity and affection?—I was flourishing while I stayed where I was!"

"Rare words, brave Bob Restamy!" said Melmont, laughing; "thou art sentimental, as well as a philosopher and prater! Perhaps if not bankrupt in thy purse,—thy 'stock in hand' of reputation was reduced in consequence of a little too much 'glibness' of that everlastingly wagging tongue of thine, which gives its owner a good character for secrecy, while it lets out all he should keep a secret! Ah! ah! is not this too at the bottom of thy 'movement' from Cheltenham?

"Oh sir——"

"Ay, thou rogue, I have now a 'crow to pluck' with thee myself, on this score! What! thou must be prating of me and my affairs to a worthy knight, Sir Jasper Lentworth, who

was rash enough to come within sound of thy clack? How daredst thou say any thing of my acquaintance with any lady,—widow, maid, or wife! Do I not owe thee a cudgelling for that, and thy impertinence this day too, on the same subject?"

"Nay, sir, you do me wrong, indeed; I never commit a breach of secrecy in any little matters of the diplomacy of love—commonly called intrigue—unless I think the vanity of the parties would be flattered by having the circumstances gently buzzed about a little, which is as often the case (the more's the pity!) as the wish to have the affair kept secret!"

"Why, thou audacious varlet! Dost thou mean to insinuate that I possessed any of this idlest of vanity? My fingers itch to make thy pate ring chimes under the leathern tongue of my horsewhip!"

"You possessed of vanity! Heavens, sir! I flatter myself that I know Bob Restamy better than to imagine he could be guilty of so gross a blunder! It was not because I thought you were a sharer of a vanity so weak,—but I considered, that in uttering a little half whisper of the circumstance of your attentions to the 'rich widow,'"—(alluding to an old report to that effect,) "and the acknowledged preference she gave you,—I should rather signalise your name in letting the world know what a triumph over other suitors you had gained! Fame, sir, fame is surely your object in life; and every little triumph helps to swell the account, as a drop the ocean; and such fame as this, though small *per se*, is great *quoad* the estimation of it, by the vanquished parties whom it would mortify in Cheltenham! Behold, sir, the motives of a man who is as tender of your reputation as yourself, and who would willingly

be an augmenter of your renown in the gay world, which is, doubtless, not to be despised: but judge of Bob Restamy better than to imagine he wished to flatter the vanity of Mr. Melmont, in hinting any tidings of his suit—of Mr. Melmont, the learned, the clever, the wise, the witty, the philosophical, the poetical, the——"

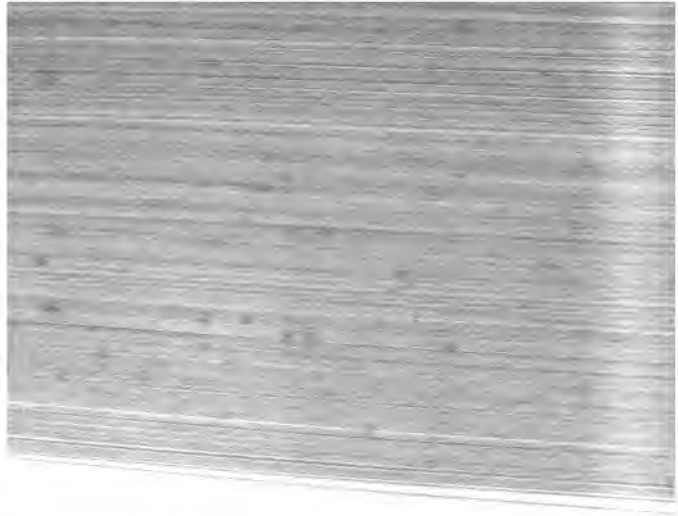
"Hold thy everlastingly gabbling tongue, knave, and think thyself well off thou hast escaped a drubbing. Add to my other attributes, and well thou may'st, the 'forbearing!' There, prate of thyself as much as thou wilt, or of whomsoever else thou pleasest, but no more of me! Here's for thy pains in holding my horse, and being faithful to my friend, thy master."

So saying, Melmont flung him a sovereign, as he rode off towards Birdlip; while Restamy's tongue struck up its peal in adding a host of encomiastic epithets, in addition to those

he had already thought proper to deal out, to propitiate our hero for having prated of his suit with "the widow," and avert from his head or shoulders a well-deserved drubbing: amongst this last shower of laudatory epithets, those of "munificent, generous, high-minded, princely," with other high-flown exclamations, sounded in full chorus of noisy buffoonery.

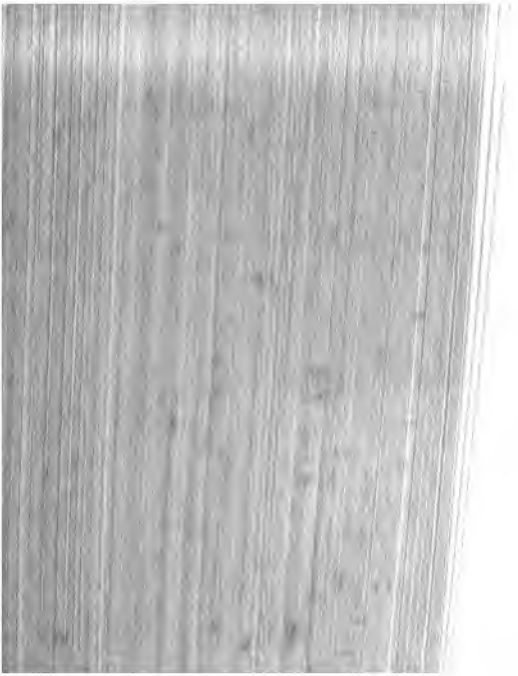
Melmont had calculated rightly enough: his party were just entering the village at one end, as he rode in at the other: he joined them accordingly on their way back to Cheltenham, monopolising, as usual, the conversation of the female part of the company, to the mortification of O'Callaghan, who, in the presence of our hero, was everlastingly "cut out," as he, the Hibernian, not Melmont, would have expressed it (the latter, by-the-by, never considered 'slang' the mark and sign of a gentleman, though

certain 'dandy-prats' who have given lessons on gentility of late years would make us believe so). The Hibernian's temper had certainly not been improved during the interval Melmont had left the party; in fact, O'Callaghan must have been rather a clumsy cicerone, and must have perceived that the fair persons before whom he wished to play the agreeable, so far from showing him that he had accomplished his object, rather gave signs of ennui at the tiresome officiousness he showed, and the awkward, overstrained and sometimes boisterous attempts which he made to be of use and polite: in truth, the only reward his ungainly gallantry obtained in the minds of his companions must have been, that he was very raw, very ignorant—in fact, "a sad bore." The contrast he felt afforded by Melmont's easy manner to his own,—so little to his own advantage,—served to augment the



bank, than a sorry quadruped which could not throw you if it would."

O'Callaghan was a little too much in the sombre vein to be able to enjoy facetiousness of any sort, much less at his own expense; so he merely muttered some reply with a very indifferent grace, and relapsed into his former sulky gloom. The reader will doubtless ask how the party in the fly went on: they had been, as usual, engaged in discussions after their own fashion, chiefly concerning comparisons between the ancient and modern times, which was given rise to by having seen the Roman pavement beyond Birdlip. The heads of Mr. Holofernes Mogg and Mr. Jochabed Grubbins were, as yet, little less swelled and sore—nay, perhaps more so—than at first; they presented a melancholy and grotesque spectacle: they were of sufficiently large size and disproportionate to the



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CHAPTER III.

AN APPETITE SPOIL'D.

Epulæ ante ora paratæ . . . .
. . . . prohibet contingere mensas
Diripuitque dapes. VIRGIL.

Les appetisans hors d'œuvre, les côtelettes, les membres de volaille en papillote, un pâté de gibier, et des fruits de la saison . . . . tous-tous étoient gâtés !

HORACE RAISSONNÉ.

THE next morning the Count Vasari was, as usual, engaged somewhere between the hours of twelve and one with a *déjeûner à la fourchette.* There was, moreover, a favourite volume on the

interest to him, not only as
appetite, but in the pleasur
detecting and analysing the
tion or not, by his domestic c
had, for that particular morn
heart on; it was a *jour maigr*
had fish, but of no commor
one who is not a *gourmand*,
himself on a knowledge of t
cuisine, and on the delicacy
refinement of his palate—ca
or can sympathise with the C
and vulgar exclaim against
taste as to eating, as "greed-

"being of refinement:" not a glutton, not a greedy devourer of large quantities,—as these coarse censors might be, perhaps, with respect to viands half as delicate as the epicurean delights in! No, the analyser of dishes is not the vulgar surfeiter in the pleasures of the table, but a nice discriminator and a thorough and proper appreciator of their "merits," as the result of a science, which cookery admits of being,—just as any other matters requiring experiment, care, and exercise of judgment. On this peculiar day, the Count's *artiste* had prepared for him a dish the most exquisite, perhaps, that the Italian epicurean is acquainted with; it was a stew, or compôt, accompanied by spices and sauce-piquante, of the tunny-fish *, (not to be

* The pelamis of the ancients, the same as the Spanish mackerel, a dish which excites raptures in all Italian gourmands, and others, too, who have ever had the good fortune to taste it. (See Dr. Neale's Travels.)

ster, which, on a ground-wo
superstructure that few pa
from longing to essay the
luxurious undertaking was
menced, in an agreeable an
and fear as to the success or
in this *grand ouvrage;*—if t
should predominate but a litt
the lobster should prevail ov
the tunny-fish itself—if the
anything but a *soupçon* of
nation—if the sauce-piquan
hair's breadth shadow from t

acidity—if, I say, in the least degree any of these judicious boundaries should be overstepped, all would be spoiled! and the Count rendered ill at ease for the rest of the day! the materials a mere waste! the *artiste* disgraced! In fact .... a *recherché* dish is a very serious matter to discuss —whether it be in language, or the practical discussion itself of the palate! the happiness, or unhappiness, health, tone of mind, of the Count were at stake! He commenced the pleasingly hazardous experiment of helping himself to a small portion of this inviting (and exquisitely promising, at least) composition! .... But, alas! what contradictions in little things as well as great are ever lurking around us hapless mortals, to snatch gratification from our reach at the moment we fancy we have made sure of it .... It was not that the Count had tasted the dish and found it wanting in any way—it was not that the prescribed limits of the proportion of

(since the dish was not tasted
but, it was because it could
at any rate, appreciated :—
Count had on a sudden fo
" cup of pleasure," as the po
tarily dropped from his ha
pale and agitated (from a di
that which a moment before
pleasing anxiety)—for just a
we said, to make trial of t
mentioned above, letters wer
which he could not resist ope
to do this was stronger th
proceed with the attack of

of pleasantry to a subject which demands the most earnest seriousness, the letters which the Count had opened and glanced over, might well spoil his appetite—as they had imparted to him tidings sufficient to cause even deeper emotions and a keener appearance of agitation by their serious import, than he betrayed. Meantime, the bell was rung,—the scarcely tasted viands were speedily sent away as though tainted, or ill-dressed—much to the pique of the *artiste*, who thought it, at first, a reflection on his art. Before the Count had fully recovered himself, our hero was announced.

"Ah! Melmont! I'm glad to see you; you're come in good time to console me!—pray sit down."

"What can be the matter, Count? Is it that something in those letters has affected you thus? Excuse me if I ask what the intelligence

may be that appears to have wrought so
so deeply?"

'Look at the letters, Melmont, and ju
Here—this is the important part—I glance
it first!—in fact, it is an avowal on the p
of my brother, on his death bed, that all
accounts he gave me of my son to his prejudi
were false, and merely calumnies" (what the
accounts were, will in due time be explained
the reader, if they are not already so); "a
this avowal," he continued, "ends with a
earnest expression of con
such

ded Melmont, in the warmth of his joy at this tainment of an object he had little thought ould have been won for him thus fortuitously d speedily — " I congratulate you on being ble, now, to make amends to him who has aboured under your displeasure, and to yourself oo, for the pain it must have cost you in rejecting him as being worthy of such displeasure!"

" Who could have imagined that my brother —my nearest kindred — one who had been treated with such confidence—such warmth of friendship—one whose shattered fortunes found a refuge and restitution in the assistance which mine were ever ready to afford,—I say, who could ever have imagined he could have taken advantage of the confidence I reposed in him, to have so abused my friendship, and deceived me in a point so important and so nearly touching me as that of the honourable conduct and character of my

son?—my only son—a dearly loved son, till my heart was poisoned by the accounts to his prejudice, which I was perpetually hearing from Lanzi—such was my brother's name. How cruel in him to make me the sport of his perjuries! how ungrateful a return for the kindnesses I had done him, when he stood most in need of consolation!" . . . . Vasari could not repress the tears that forced themselves from his eyes, as the whole weight of the recollections of his systematic kindness to his brother came on him, contrasted by the baseness of the return he had met: he grew more composed for a moment, but it was but to relapse into an agitation as strong and painful as before.

"Would that I knew where to find him—my son—whom my unkindness has driven from me! unnatural that I have been, yet unwittingly so! To think that the picture placed before me was

so false an illusion! When shall I have it in my power to see him again? to assure him of my forgiveness? to ask, on the contrary, his, for my injustice to him? I call heaven to witness I am not a hardhearted man—not an unnatural father—nor willingly would give myself up to unjust prejudices; but who could hear a tale so plausibly told, of circumstances corroborated by so many suborned witnesses, and not be incensed against the person to whose prejudice they were related? What father would not be justified in driving from his hearth any offspring that had so disgraced his name? . . . I am not to blame! . . Would I could recover my son in order to justify myself to him, and to make him amends for his proscription! . . . . His poor mother in vain pleaded for him: I thought her weak and undiscerning—when I was too much blinded myself! . . . I wish I had made more rigid

inquiry! A closer investigation would have shown me that the Countess and yourself, Melmont, did not plead for my son in vain. I was too hasty in not listening to others, as well as Lanzi."

"Do not afflict yourself any more, Signor," replied Melmont; "it is in vain distressing yourself in this manner. I trust you will get the amends you desire for the pain you have suffered yourself, and be able in turn to grant me solation for the pain you have inflicted!... I trust you will recover your son,—especially as you have in me a witness to his innocence,—which I am happy that these letters from the Countess have so opportunely placed before you. The hand of Providence is plainly traced here—those lines I revere as much as were I to see the spiritual writing on the wall, as mentioned in Scripture! ... these lines—these letters spea

the vindication of innocence;—it is needless to ask if a less awful testimony on the part of Lanzi than that of a dying confession would have had weight on you:—but do not distress yourself, Count; I did not mean to add any impulse to your grief, but merely to justify myself and the Countess as having ever said every thing in our power to reconcile your feelings towards your son—that is, as far as you would hear us. I am happy, at length, to be corroborated by a testimony so convincing! so awful! I repeat, I trust you will recover your son—and soon."

"How? where?—you speak mysteries! Where can I find him? He was supposed to have left Italy, some said for Greece—some even for the East."

"Some for England, as I hope you may find. Let me again entreat you to afflict yourself no more, but to hope that this storm of passion

event. Meanwhile, I must
you—*au revoir*; I will not go
receiving from you a promise
the pleasure of seeing you t
to-day at the Priory, in or
talk more about a matter tha
so much. Our *table d'hôte* is *bi*
will venture to assure you as
as you ever had for a repa
So saying, our lively hero
warmly by the hand, and as
conscious that he had it in his
his unhappiness by his benevo

The Count remained absor

the account, as we have already gleaned, of the death of her brother-in-law, which had taken place shortly after the scene recorded in the second chapter of our second volume between himself and the Countess, in which his guilty character is shown in so disgusting but true a light. He had met his death from an attack by banditti, of which there were, some time ago, numerous bands lurking in the caverns and forests on the Apennines, and about the river Magra, the whole way down to the sea. On his death-bed, as we have just seen, he had made a confession of his injustice towards his nephew, in his false representations to his father about the affair of Antonio—an event which we have already heard feelingly lamented from the mouth of Lavotin (in the opening of our second volume), whom the reader had long ago recognised as the injured son himself of the Count

tion (by way of amends) of
conduct was added to the conf
statements forged against hin
too, relating to his brother's
restored to the Countess. The
in the eighth chapter, he had
own ends. This confession f
giveness from the Count Vass
and,—more than all,—Heaven

The Countess then had adde
the one stating that this confess
warded to the State of Naples,
proclamation had been made o
son, and indemnity for himself
under the process and procla

the Countess stated that she was coming with her retinue to meet the Count in England; adding, that she did so with the hopes of their being able to recover their son, she having instituted the closest inquiries concerning the track he took when last missed in Italy, which inquiries led strongly to the prospect of regaining him in England.—May she soon experience this happiness is our prayer—though the chances of disappointment in life are so great we can hardly venture to look forward! In this instance let us trust they will not "dog" the path that has been already rugged enough and unencouraging. Let us hope that a parent who has endured so much may meet with the recompense due to her anxiety—she will not find an ungrateful son.

CHAPTER IV.

FEAR AND HOPE.

Restamy, too, was in the way to hail his arrival.

"*Euge domine honoratissime*," said this classical 'shadow'* of his master; "I am happy to see you come, sir; my master awaits you, and everything is ready to go—*presto* is the word with Bob Restamy—the stowing the things in, on, or about, the carriage will be the labour of a minute." To this duty accordingly he addressed himself; while, scarcely had he finished speaking, than Lavotin (for so we may call him till the name is, by and by, entirely discarded) himself came forth, when Melmont thus greeted his friend:—

"Ah, Gustavo! how fares it with you this morning? You see I am come true to my time. Come! jump in; and, Restamy, do you put the things in—the light matters inside, the rest out."

* Quos Mæcenas adduxerat, *umbras*.—Hor.

and, this piece of duty perf
the dickey, and off the frie
ham; the good woman, as t
some most reverent courte
having failed to inspire 'h
he would have said, with
the consequence of his maste
sented as a refugee nobleman
himself partaking of his cons
and his fortunes: the good wo
ally convinced of this sublin
handsome present she receive
of the friends from her humble
threshold. Bob Restamy al

to the woman) the 'young Count Gustavo:' whether this was his right designation or not, or something between both,—that is, approaching to it,—we need not instruct the reader, but shall yet have occasion more precisely to declare. We are already aware that this Bob Restamy, in the earliest stage of our acquaintance with him, had, from his own account, served as valet abroad to the person he so designated, from whom he had been separated by circumstances—perhaps those of the flight just mentioned of his master from his own country; and he had now, —as he explained to Melmont the preceding day,—rejoined his old master on his finding out he was in England. It was on this point that Melmont was questioning Lavotin.

"How came Restamy to discover you were in this country? He is a cunning, sharp fellow."

"Ay, and a very faithful fellow, when tried,

though a little of a rogue in grain: wh
appears he had come to town in the coun
his business, and I there by accident came a
him, and nothing would satisfy him but you
his destinies with mine, and serving me thro
thick and thin—bad fortune as well as p
With this determination he sold his effects do
in the country, gave up his business of fri
and attached himself to me."

"I admire the fellow for his fidelity. I fe
much, my knave Fleuret would show little
that attachment for my interests—if
of prosperity; he

crifice to the gods, by which he got robbed of s accustomed dinner *."

They were now on the most beautiful part of heir journey, on the descent from Birdlip, that ommands so splendid a prospect from the hill, which was seen to advantage from the fineness and clearness of the weather. Earth spread gladly "her green breast" in the blaze! Brilliant and beautiful, indeed, shone forth the day!—shone forth to light up in the heart a gladness which was caught "in bright contagion" from the glow that beamed over exulting nature! Far through the wide landscape—far as eye could scan—were the woods and rustic spires amidst the white cottages, the hills, and laughing valleys, lit up in the ray,—while the streams that now poured headlong over the rocks, now wandered through the meadows, sparkled in the light, and as they

* See Plutus, act v.

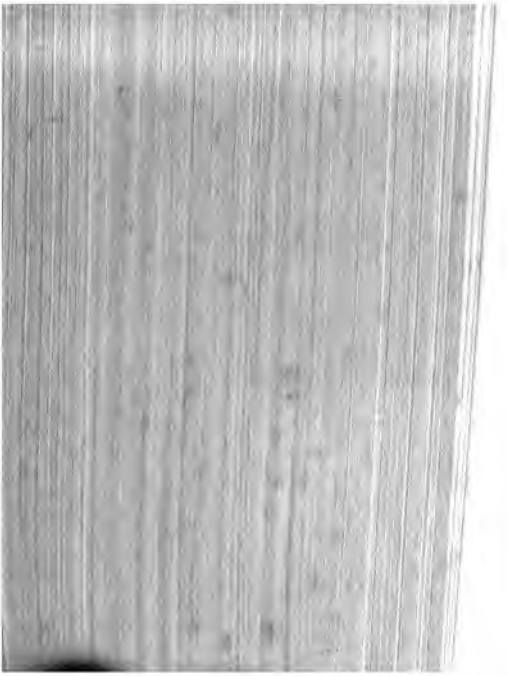
flashed vividly beneath it, seemed as though they smiled in their giddy course through the wide festivity of nature!

"A day of such radiance and loveliness, a sky of such harmony, a smile on the brow of every object we see,—all, all," said Melmont, "yield us an omen of joy, of happiness, in our expedition, and success in the wishes of our hearts! This is the voice their propitious carol sings to us! Away with apprehension — away with gloom! Let the soul direct its adoring vision to the mighty Providence that lights up this gladness around us, and believe, as we silently thank him in our hearts, that it is His encouraging smile that cheers us through these monuments around us of his goodness, which he thus lights up to greet us in brightness and joy, and every blissful feature that beams in liveliness and hope! Yes," continued Melmont, in the warmth of his heart, as he

pressed his friend's hand, "the result of this expedition will be prosperous (though it is impossible to determine when, precisely)—but every thing speaks to me,—the glad presentiment of my heart tells me so—that you have not fallen in with me, without some happy result being attendant on a meeting so providential."

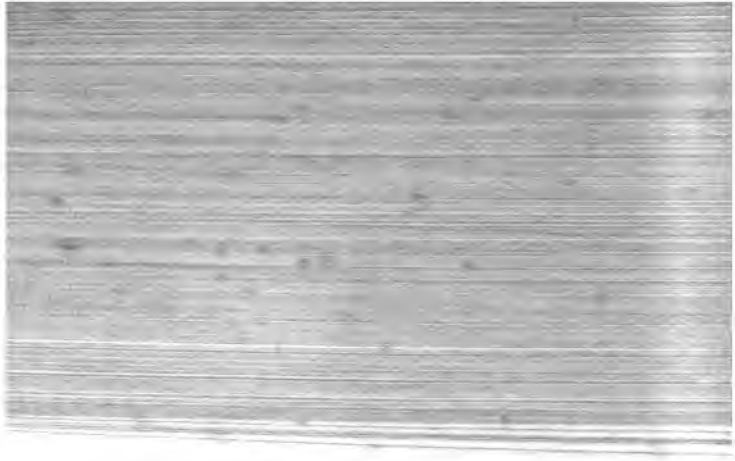
Lavotin felt his friend's kindness and warmth of heart.

"I should be insensible, indeed, to the goodness of Providence," he answered, "were I not to feel encouragement, even a gleaming of joy, which has so long slept in my heart, and of hope and confidence in the sentiments you so warmly and generously breathe, for enlivening a spirit that has certainly, not without reason, been depressed. Yes, I will look forward to the future as a brighter prospect than that to which my eyes have been too long accustomed—I will



present state of the Pontificate and its former splendour,—of the cardinals and the church generally,—the ruin of the great modern Roman families, from an extravagance that had, years ago, in Voltaire's time, called forth his censure and ridicule,—the reminiscences of its classic greatness, its beauty, and its objects of curiosity, —the pleasing recollection of particular spots, and the remarks of interest attached to them—Tivoli, Terni, Frascati. A variety of matters such as these served to amuse them to the end of their expedition. Just at this moment the string of Lavotin's (not dumb, nor in truth soulless companion) guitar broke,—the instrument having fallen from the seat where it had been placed by a jolt of the carriage. This gave rise to a joke or reflection, whichever the reader pleases—nay, to both,—a reflection on the part of Lavotin, and a joke on the part of

The carriage having now arrived at the door of the Priory, Melmont conducted his friend in doors, and saw him established in the apartments he had formerly occupied himself. The friends then separated to prepare for dinner at the *table d'hôte*, where Melmont intended to dine, for the sake of affording his companionship to his friend, who was a stranger,—and to whom he added as they parted, "that dinner would be ready in an hour's time precisely." With this "interesting intelligence" he left Lavotin to complete his toilette, and repaired to perform the same important duty himself.



an opposite door, whose eyes rested on Lavotin, who gazed anxiously at the person, who now recognised him . . . .

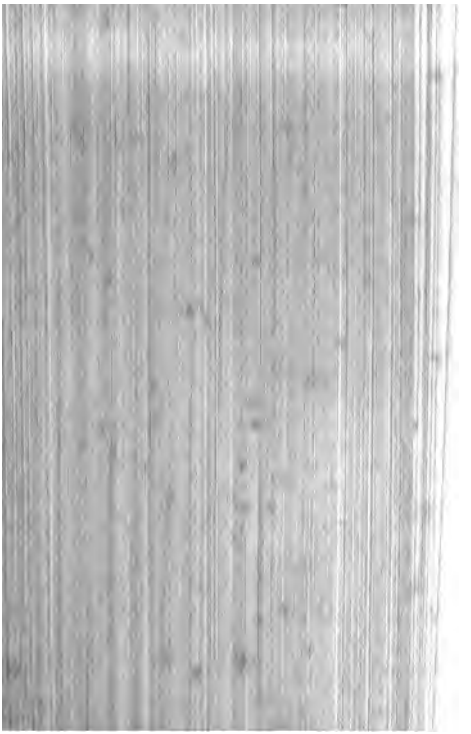
"My father!" exclaimed Lavotin (which assumed name we may now finally discard for his real one of Gustavo Vasari), as he sprang towards him, and flung himself on his knees before him. "Is it you that I see? An injured—indeed, an injured and misrepresented son supplicates at your feet for forgiveness, and entreats you to receive him again to that favour which Providence itself shows to be his due, by thus unexpectedly throwing him in your way to implore it!"

The eyes of the whole party assembled were, of course, turned with intense interest to this scene, about the circumstances of which they were all in the dark. The Count Vasari (for such we need not say it was) raised his son up

and embraced hi
thanked Provide

" My son, I h
this justification
I will speak to
made me as anxi
before been disi
that a father is
favour again, as
Let us embrace-
recal. At a pro
explain to you a

me by this surprising chance, it shall be hereafter gratified;—they, and my friend Mr. Melmont, will, perhaps, excuse my presence amongst them at the party where I was this day to have been a guest. My feelings are a little too much excited to make it as agreeable as it should be, either for them or me, that I should join so large a society. Come, Gustavo," he continued, to his son, "let us retire; our repast were more properly in private, where there is so much to communicate that regards ourselves alone. Mr. Melmont, however, will not deny us his company—we cannot, indeed, do without him;—though invited here as his guests, we must take him away with us and make him ours. He is our mutual friend,—our privacy indeed would be felt painful without his presence—too painful perhaps. Come, Melmont, oblige me by accompanying me and my son to my residence."



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must have perceived in O'Callaghan a sketch of many a fortune-hunter from the Emerald Isle, of which persons Cheltenham is said, (as Bath, in old times,) to be a somewhat favourite resort.

On the arrival of Melmont and his two friends at the Count's, the latter, after the cloth was removed, proceeded to unfold to his son the purport of all that we have heard so much at length, in the several chapters that explain the baseness of the Count Vasari's brother in his misrepresentation of his nephew, and the exhibition of his motives for so doing, shown in the scene at the château near Spezzia; which motives we remember to have been so justly ascribed to him by his nephew, in those unhappy solitary reflections on the shore near Dunkirk. We will not embitter the recollections of the reader, on the one hand, nor intrude useless repetitions on him, on the other, by

and his son. Melmoot, as
happy (as the ancient "C
sented) in being able to c
gratulations, on both sides
so happily made in his p
joined in the expressions o
regret at the heinous conduct
it, of Lanzi.

"But enough!" added th
subject. He has paid the fo
It were needless to heap a
grave,—I forgive him;—but
recur to his memory."

Gustavus was indignant,—

had received at the hands of the Abbate Lanzi, the guilty slave of those direst passions that can agitate human nature—Hate and Envy:—the more guilty, as he belied his priestly character. He was, however, consoled on understanding that his mother would soon be with those to whom she was dearest; that he might expect to see her, perhaps, in the short space of one week. In his mother he recognised all that was most dear to him now. She had ever been the earnest advocate for him against the misrepresentations of his uncle, as we have before heard him express, in the chapter where he was first introduced to us. Gratitude, therefore, on this account, in this bitter passage of his life, bound yet more strongly the natural ties of filial affection; compassion too, for the indignities—nay cruelties—she had suffered from his uncle, in his endeavours to wrest from her those written testimonies by which he hoped unjustly

dwelling on those subjects of
interest to him; but it could
and his thoughts were agreeab
friend Melmont, who congra
being now able to lay aside the
had been under the necessity
his safety, and even life,
from the persecution he was o
a defaulter against the state.
under which he had laboured, (a
been informed, in the Count'
to Melmont of the Countes
rescinded. Melmont now add
by his right name, which was t

was happy again to hear his right name from those whose esteem he valued. He had, indeed, been (as we have seen) addressed by that chatterbox Restamy, his valet, as the young Count Gustavo; but as he had no business to call himself 'Count" present, he had checked his loquacious retainer's impertinence as well as he could. As the Countess was expected over in about a week, it was settled between Melmont and Gustavus, that they should go up, in each other's company, to town, to meet her. And now that the subject of bitterness which the history of Gustavo has unfolded was so happily soothed, and peace restored, Melmont ventured to ask him of the prior passages of his life,—that is, before they had become acquainted, and before Gustavo had formed any acquaintance with the regretted Fornarina. The friends were now strolling together down the promenade.

"Yes, yes,—I used inde
emotion scarcely less than tha
the memory of Fornarina.
person I ever loved, and, w
perplexing, I lost her almost
her. There was a mystery
have often wished to unravel,
could understand. All I kn
loved her; that she taught
what love is; that if I had n
I never would have directed
ther; and, I may add, that
heart a place with Fornarina.

"Are we then capable of l

Louise. And there was an excuse for my loving Fornarina, as she had all the qualities of the first object of my affections, and was very like Louise too."

"You are unfortunate indeed in your attachments; one lost by Circumstance,—the other, by the worse circumstance of Death. But do not let the recollection sadden you; you have found, unexpectedly found, a father; perhaps you may yet meet Louise again one of these days. I know nothing more interesting and more delightful than the happy chances which sway our destinies, and throw old and lost friends and faces in our way sometimes when we least expect it; and the pleasure is still greater from its being unexpected!"

But here the friends parted, Melmont returning to Lansdowne, and Gustavo joining his father, who at that moment met them.

CHAPTER

THE CARTEL

Can a man commit a more he

Sir Lucius O

O'CALLAGHAN, as has been

in his bosom deep and mighty

our hero, on the most ridiculo

ciple in the world. He was

that Melmont gained more in

some other person, the widow yet refused to accept of him,—O'Callaghan. The Emeralder being in a fury at this, looked out for some quarter in which to vent his spleen—he could find none but that of our innocent hero. However, whether he had reason or not for quarrelling, he was determined, like Sir Lucius O'Trigger, to do so; for he considered, though Melmont had not indeed taken the widow away from him by marriage, yet that he had done so by rendering her, at any rate, indifferent to him (O'Callaghan), by so constantly eclipsing him in her presence, as he did, by his superior intelligence and power of pleasing. The result of all this tumult in the bosom of O'Callaghan will appear from a cartel which Fleuret that morning put into the hands of our hero before he had risen: it was an elegant specimen of Hibernian

insulted me! Yis, have ye
an Irishman, and where's a
name? That I may prove
satisfaction of ye for rasons t
or if ye can't, I'll tell 'em ye,
me the amends I require at y
palaver about rasons beforeh
this kind; my rasons are my
waiting your pleasure on the
at seven this evening.

"PATRICK

"To Arthur Melmont, Esq

"His rasons are hi

laughing at the grotesque Iricism of the note. "Well, I'll humour his whim, though it is a great condescension on my part to a needy, hot-headed, mere adventuring fellow, whose pretensions, I fancy, I have seen pretty well through for some time, and this, I imagine, is the secret of his pique." With this he rang the bell for Fleuret, ordered pen and paper to be brought him, and wrote the following answer in bed to the magnanimous cartel of the incensed Hibernian :—

"SIR,—If I understand aright the vulgar terms of a note which I have just received, subscribed with your name, it is your request that I should give you a meeting. Though I strongly apprehend that I am subjecting myself to a certain degree of degradation in taking so far notice of you as to answer your

very strange communication, yet I will waive the consideration of who and what you are, and will accordingly condescend to do my endeavours to add an ounce of congenial lead to that which, under the designation of a head, already burdens your shoulders,—at the time and place you mention.

"ARTHUR MELMONT."

The note being sealed, was given to Fleurette and despatched forthwith. O'Callaghan was waiting, meantime, in ardent expectation of an answer. "By St. Patrick," he exclaimed to himself, "the blood of an Irishman, when once roused, must have some vent to appease it! Like our own swate little Liffy, when it is swollen a 'bit high,' it can't be asy till it pours its saucy current into the sea." In such strain did O'Callaghan rhodomontade to himself, walk-

ing up and down his room, clenching his fist, and grinding his teeth occasionally in the gust of his rage, when he thought of the loss of the widow all through the indifference occasioned towards him by the address of his rival.

"I should be glad to lower his crest a bit, and should I," said this bloodthirsty Tartar. "It's not enough, isn't it, to stale away the swate darling object of one's affections, and all her still swater bit of a fortune, but he must needs laugh at one before her face, and bad luck to him! Who's to endure such 'policy' as this, faith? I don't care if he niver bites any thing but dust again, after I've met the conçated Saxon. Hasn't he always showed a sart of a contimpt towards me, as if he was somebody and I was nobody? An't I Patrick O'Callaghan, descended from the ryal family of the ould Limerick princes, every day in the week,

fury of O'Callaghan, as far
of shooting his foe; thoug
tion somewhat appeased hi
dency was counterbalanced
what he had just complain
placing so little value upo
portance, or even respectabi
what are ye?" exclaimed
looked at the note again—"
I'll teach ye, sir, I'm as good
dare to talk so coolly of addi
on my shoulthers? By the p
own!—for I'll pepper ye for
So saying, he seized a case

him here, now, at the right distance, I'd pay aff his nate compliment! Howiver, all in good time!"

So saying, the son of Erin bridled in his impatience as well as he could till the appointed time, when he found his adversary ready, waiting to meet him.

The spot was very convenient and "handy" for little matters of this nature. Melmont's second was his friend Gustavo, who looked with ineffable contempt at O'Callaghan and his second. This was a wild, red-hot Irish adventurer, too, similar to his principal. (O'Callaghan had first asked Mr. Mogg to be his second, but Mogg was too terrified—ditto Grubbins.) Melmont smiled at Gustavo's countenance. "Oh, never mind if it is somewhat of a *derogé*, giving this fellow a meeting: what else could I do in charity to him? If I don't shoot him, it will,

Come, I'll just tip his elbow for him! . . . there," he continued, as the parties fired, "see how he dances!—I told you I would make his elbow tingle!—I think he has had enough of it."

In fact, such was the case: O'Callaghan was hit in the arm, just inconveniently enough to make him look ridiculous, utterly disabled from continuing the feud, and furious at being thus stopped short in a "business," which, as he said, he wished to "go as far as it could." He stamped and swore more like a madman than any thing else; meantime it was necessary his arm should be bound up, and put in a sling.

Melmont could not help laughing, though he checked his risible propensities, as he looked somewhat scornfully at O'Callaghan, as something beneath him, and said he trusted he was now satisfied. He did not wait to hear what the Irishman had to say in reply, but left him in

fortunate for O'Callaghan was it, he had so lenient and charitable a foe—at the same time that he was, if he pleased, so dangerous and formidable a one. As for O'Callaghan, he was nothing of a proficient in this interesting knack. His arm being now bound up, his vulgar rage sought refuge in execrations, which were but impotent, at the "ugly knock he had had jist at the beginning!" "Who," he continued, "should have thought the conçated bit-o'-blood of a fellow could have aimed so well! It will raise his conçate, will it?—Though he might better spare it! for, after all, I believe it was chance, and no aim of his own, that helped me to the knock!"

O'Callaghan's shot, by the by, we ought to observe, had gone so clumsily, and so much out of its intended latitude, that it wandered through some bushes at some distance to the side, and

CHAPTER VII.

THE VILLAINS AT WORK AGAIN.

Where can she be?
THE RENEGADO.

THE Count Vasari was surprised and pleased this morning, by the receipt of a letter from his countess, informing him of her arrival in town with her niece; and accordingly Gustavo lost no time in proceeding to meet her forthwith, with the intention of bringing her down to his father after he had passed a day or two in town,

get her into the power of himself and his ffian agents, and the consequences he dreaded consider. Melmont little doubted, that if such ere the case, she was secreted in the abode of llany from which he had formerly rescued her: was to this spot then that he lost no time in arrying, to endeavour to trace her, and rescue er again, though at the hazard of his own life.

It is time, however, before we see the result f his enterprise, to review what had been going n at this spot till the present period.

The moment that Falder perceived his machinations with respect to our hero and his sister were discomfited, the whole weight of his resentment fell on the author of their frustration—Starling: he had no doubt that this man would fo[illegible] what he had already done, by bringing [illegible] and appearing as evidence against [illegible] termined, therefore, to be before-

and address him in the u
thus decoy him into their
directed, that means shoul
depriving him of the use
the opportunity of some
company), by administerin
wine he should drink. In
be brought to the cellar,
already been described as
the gang; and what wa
remains to be seen.

But short-sighted truly
Falder was contriving vill
as a prevention of mischie

It will be remembered, when the reader was first introduced to the scene to which his attention is at present called, viz., the cellar or cave where the thieves and the degraded females, their companions, met,—that an old woman was mentioned as forming one of the group, and that she had been sensibly affected at hearing the name of "Falder" uttered by one of the persons she was sitting near. Whatever might be her wrongs, it appears she had some cause of resentment against the individual to whom she had subsequently recognised this name as belonging, and she now sought means to let him feel the effect of such resentment. Her desire was to give him, if she could, into the hands of the "police;" she therefore looked about her for some instrument to effect her purpose, and introduce the officers of justice. She was herself too infirm to be altoge-

as they quickly, however, are, in sinners of her age, in too many instances. It was thus the old woman continued a conversation she had with the little girl:—

"So young, my child, and so soon betrayed! —as your condition is, so once was mine! Quit this place when you next can,—let me, as a mother, speak to you, and entreat you to return to honesty and your friends."

Aleine, such was the little girl's name, could only answer at first (for she was not a hardened girl) with her tears. At length she said that her friends had turned their backs on her; and here it may be remarked, that in thus shutting the door on repentance so many are hardened in, and forced into sin, who would otherwise willingly abstain from further error, if they could not, indeed, recal the past. The old woman continued:—"Well, child, listen to me. I feel an interest in you,

here, and I believe it was the hand of an inscrutable Providence that led me;—I came not here, I find, without some purpose to execute."

She checked herself, as her manner became here more impassioned. Aleine regarded her with surprise, and asked what the purpose was. The old woman continued, without immediately answering the question—

"I have, in spite of my frequent destitution through life, managed eventually to save a little sum, but still—enough to support *you* in some honest trade. Aleine, this shall be yours, only you must earn it by serving me in one particular." Here she spoke with great earnestness, as the little girl regarded her fixedly. "When you next go out," continued she, and paused, while Aleine still regarded her, but with a look that bespoke she was ready to obey her commands,—and accordingly the old woman put her

"Hush," said the old woman, looking round; —but no one was near enough to overhear.

At this moment the women who were going out, called from the other end of the cave to the girl, who answered to the summons; and, bidding her monitress good-by, she joined the group, who now ascended the ladder which led from the cave or kitchen to the vaulted passage by which, we remember on a previous occasion, an outlet was afforded from this strange abode.

"God speed you!" said the old woman to herself, as she watched her emissary depart, who looked back from the top of the landing-place, just as she was passing through the door that opened on the cave, and nodded to the old woman, as much as to say she was bent on performing her promise. The old woman waved her hand, and then seated herself down to employ herself in knitting, in a corner she was

allowed to occupy without molestation. She had not been seated long, before two ruffians, one of whom was Geoffrey, entered the cavern bearing a man who appeared asleep from the effects of some intoxicating liquor, one of them supporting his head, the other his legs. After having descended the ladder with him, they placed him down in a part of the cavern not far from the spot where the old woman was sitting.

"Lord! what a weight the fellow is; it is worth something to have the carrying such a load of live lumber."

"Live lumber! ay, and if we make it dead lumber, it will be worth something. Despatch is the word: what say you? Shall it be now?"

"Ay, no time better than whilst he's asleep. Falder wished it all over before he came this evening."

"Well, then, the sooner the better; for before long we shall have the 'Count'—(so they called him, although we have dropped the fictitious or "slang" name)—amongst us. Come—there's no one looking; the thieves are all out, and the women, too, with their 'pals.' Now then . . . ."

At this moment, the remorseless ruffian who spoke (no other than Geoffrey) was about to commit the fatal act which would have made poor Starling's sleep (for it was Starling whom they had succeeded in making thus their prisoner) a long one indeed,—when a shriek, which pierced the echoes of the cavern, and multiplied itself into a thousand tongues, burst upon the wretches, and seemed as if a voice cried to them from every corner of the cave to desist from their horrid purpose. They started, and

looked round to see whence the interruption proceeded, when the old woman rushed before them, and cried out to them for the love of heaven not to commit so horrid a deed in cold blood.

"Peace! you old harridan, or you shall be sent packing to keep this miscreant company."

"The old hag has spoiled all," said the other ruffian; "who should have thought of her being here?"

The old woman was, meantime, bending over the features of the sleeping man, and gazing earnestly on them, when the monster Geoffrey cried out, "What! shall we be spoiled of our reward because of this old worn-out thing? What! are you afraid of her evidence against us? Away with her, I say! What would the Count say?—I've no patience."

So without more ado, the ruffian seized the old woman, who clung to Starling, crying out, "It is he! it is he!"

"Peace, old ronyon!—here is for thy mischief-making"....and he was just going to pull the trigger of his pistol against her breast, when the struggles of the old woman, and the sudden start he gave at seeing the sleeping man begin to move, so far unsettled his aim that the pistol was discharged in the air. The report, meantime, thundering, as it did, through the vault, now completely awakened Starling; the cries of the old woman brought him to his senses, as she screamed out—

"My son! my son!—get up and defend yourself from murderers!—help your mother and yourself!"

Starling, astonished as he was at finding himself in this spot, yet aware of his danger from

the attempt of one of the ruffians to hold him down, struggled violently, and, springing on his legs, the two men and himself were soon engaged in a warm conflict, in which he would most likely have been the victim ultimately, for they had abandoned their design of dispatching the old woman when their chief prey remained unsecured, when suddenly a loud knocking was heard at the door, which somewhat interrupted the fray, and the old woman ran or hobbled to the ladder, and, as adroitly as she could, opened the door, and was ready to faint with ecstasy as she saw Aleine enter with the police. "Thank the mercy of heaven! heaven be praised!" she screamed out. "There! there!" she said to the police, "secure those men!" which was accordingly done, while the old woman ran up to Starling.

"My son, my son! God be praised that your

mother has been made the instrument of your deliverance."

"My mother!" said Starling, in astonishment.

"Yes," she replied; "and these men," she said to the police, "were about to be his murderers! I have overheard it all,—I heard them mention the name of Falder as that of the person who instigated them to this deed."

"Falder!" said Starling, with surprise, "had he designed thus far against me? But I thought as much! I knew to what an extent his animosity would go! But, let me ask,—my astonishment to hear you address me as your son, is even greater than to find Falder should have designed against my life."

"I will inform you in a moment; but, first of all," turning to the officers of justice who were present to the number of seven or eight, "it is for

the arrest of this Falder that I have sent for you . . . ."

"You?—you traitress!" cried out Geoffrey.

"Hold, ruffian!" cried the chief of the police; "let the woman speak. Your arrest is as it should be; but she has charges against others to make,—apparently against your leader or employer."

"Yes! I repeat, it is for the arrest of their employer I have sent for you. Aleine, I thank you, child! Here is your reward," she said, giving the little girl the purse she had promised her, "listen to my injunction, and, while you have an opportunity, leave this hated and dangerous place before any of your mischievous companions return. I will, as soon as I can, join you,—as soon as I have seen the miscreant Falder consigned to the hands of justice; meantime, follow the advice I gave you and fear God and live honestly!"

The girl was touched, and with tears begged the mother's blessing, after which, with repeated promises to obey her injunctions, and fixing on a spot where she would meet her, when the latter should leave the cave, Aleine departed, and the old woman continued, addressing herself to Starling:—"If it surprises you to learn your parentage as far as relates to my claim in it, you will, perhaps, be yet more surprised before I have said many words to learn who was the other person who shared that claim: that person you know,—though you knew not me—but that person you do not know to be—your father!—Listen." Starling, meantime, hung over her words in breathless attention,—with an interest and earnest anxiety that was shared by the police-officers present,—all, indeed, except the two prisoners, who heard what passed with brutal indifference, now

and then cursing their mischance to each other, and silenced by the reprimand of the chief of police. The old woman thus continued her story:—"Unhappy has been my lot from an early period of my existence. I was but young when I was betrayed by one of the most hardhearted and selfish of men;—he took me away from a good home, and from respectable parents, whose only child I was;—they died of broken hearts—they who had educated, reared, caressed, loved me! (and here the tears choked her utterance for a moment). They died of broken hearts—while I was soon thrust out on the wide, wide world by my betrayer,—a victim to woe, and want, and shame! but the more bitter was my situation, inasmuch as I was left in a state of pregnancy. To pass over the distresses I suffered during all that harassing period, suffice it to say, that my talents and education enabled me to obtain a

situation, where I supported myself and my child, a boy, till he was of the age of seven years and more; but, being taken care of, as he was, by strangers, it was not very frequently I had him under my own eye, except occasionally, and once when I went, as usual, to see him, I was informed he had strolled away, and they had never been able to trace him since."

Starling started at these words, and put his hand to his forehead, as if he had recalled some circumstance to mind which had long slept unremembered.—"It is so! it is so!" at length he said,—"I remember the circumstance—it breaks on me—my mother! my mother! let me embrace you!" He folded his aged parent to his breast, and continued,—"The features you remember in me, as those of your child, perhaps are plainer to you than the recollection of yours to me; but, now you mention the circum-

stances, I indeed recollect those traits" looking fixedly at her, "but faintly, as in a confused dream—but still I recollect them, and think, too, I can recal the tones of the voice, as you used to ask old dame Starling (under whose care I was, and whose name I have ever borne after me; yes, the facts come fresher now on my memory—I can recal the circumstance of my running away from London, where we were; it was unintentional on my part; to the best of my recollection I got into a waggon, just going out of town, with some other boys, and fell asleep. My companions left me; and, when I awoke, I found myself some distance from town, and the hour, too, was night. The impression of dismay I felt was so strong, that it has never been effaced; and, though it had long slept suspended, yet it now wakes on me as strongly as if it were but yesterday! Well, the waggoner

was kind to me, and promised that his master would take me into his employ, most likely, if I proved a handy lad;—he did so, on our arrival in the country, and the man's pleading my cause;—he did more, he sent me to a Sunday school, and I so well improved, that, on growing older, I engaged myself to an attorney of some eminence, a considerable distance off—the name of that man (he was agent to the late Mr. Melmont) was Falder."

"Wondrous, wondrous dispensation of Providence!" cried the old woman; "to make the child the instrument of vengeance on the unfeeling betrayer of his mother——"

The old woman uttered this in a kind of frensy; and the words had scarcely proceeded from her mouth, before a knocking at the door was heard.

"It is he!" she cried, "it is he!"—and,

motioning two policemen to the door, she ran up the steps and opened it—and discovered Falder! "Men!" she cried out to the officers of justice, "there is your prisoner!" and he had scarcely set foot on the floor of the cavern before he was seized by the two men, who sprang upon him on each side.

"What is the meaning of this?" he cried, starting; "what, betrayed!" looking at Stirling and Geoffry. "How is this!" seeing the men prisoners.

"Aye, punished as you deserve!" said the old woman, regarding him fixedly, and addressing him with a solemn air.

"Who are you, old woman?" he said, returning her gaze with an angry look.

"Falder!" she answered.

"Who are you, I say, that address me by that name? I don't know it!" he said, he

ting—but, looking at Starling again, he continued, "I see who has betrayed me!"

"That name," continued the old woman, "which you would pretend, if you could, not to know, you once knew! and I, too, knew it once—to my sorrow! Would I had never known it!"

"Pshaw! woman, you never did know it before that villain betrayed me!" and he looked again at Starling fiercely, and seemed as if searching about his person for some concealed weapon.

"He never betrayed you, as you call it; if even he had brought you to justice, I doubt not that it would have been but too just a retaliation for some villany on your part——"

"Peace, maniac!" said Falder, fiercely.

"I will speak—if you complain of betrayal, know that it is *I* that have betrayed you—I, the injured, insulted, lost Agatha——"

"Agatha!" exclaimed Falder, starting, and glancing a look at her, and then withdrawing it, and resuming his tone of fierceness, "I know you not! nor that name——"

"Alas! then how is it I know *you* so well in consequence of my being that unhappy person to whom that name belongs? Who made me unhappy? Ask yourself. But this is the hour of retribution! Yes, Agatha is revenged—Agatha has betrayed you!" she added, with a hysteric laugh.

"I will bear this no longer," cried Falder; "if I am betrayed—if I must be given up to justice, and lose all station in society—I will not make such a forfeiture tamely, nor without reason. Die, woman! — maniac!—die, and receive the reward of your betrayal!" and with these words he rushed from between the policemen (who stood on each side of him) before they

were aware of his intention, and, drawing a pistol from his bosom, discharged it with intent to shoot the old woman (whom we shall now call Agatha), when Starling rushed forward, crying in a tone of anguish,—

"Hold! hold!—you will not murder my mother!" and, as he said this, he received the ball intended for her in his own breast, and fell back on the floor as the policemen hastened forward to catch him in their arms.

"Wretch!" exclaimed Agatha, "you are the murderer of your own son!"

"My son!" exclaimed Falder, momentarily agitated.

"Yes, your son!" She then related the circumstances briefly of Starling's history, as given by himself a short time back, which had evidently an effect on the hardened villain to whom they were addressed. But he soon

come in the way of danger l

"He did it to preserve
Falder," said Agatha, "the
have destroyed! Would tha
had you destroyed,—long, lo
my peace, my prospects, m
made me old and haggard e
and I regret that fatal sho
breast rather than my son's."

She here flung her arms
was dying fast. He had jus
put his hand into his bosom,
papers, which he delivered t
who was now about to take

which their employer had now executed by a savage mistake, and in the gust of passion.

"These papers," said the dying man, "I desire may be given into the hands of ..... here his voice faltered, and he gasped for breath .... "of Mr. Melmont .... they relate to ...." The power of articulation failed — the dying man fell back, and, muttering a prayer to heaven, he bowed his head to Agatha, and, fixing a last wild look on the now appalled Falder, sunk back with a convulsive movement and died.

After some moments' pause, in which all present hung over the corpse in the terror which the sight of death, especially when marked by violence, occasions, the chief of police was obliged to remove his prisoners, and was about to withdraw with Geoffrey and his comrade in custody, leaving it for another party of police to bring Falder afterwards. He took the papers

which Starling had given him, and told Agatha that he would see that her son's directions were obeyed, and told her he would see his body taken wherever she might direct. After his departure with the two first apprehended prisoners, one of the "gang" entered the cave from a door that opened into it from the other side; it was a private door, elevated over a flight of steps, and used only by Falder and his more particular companions for ready access to the "haunted house." The person that now entered was greeted earnestly by Falder, who, on his entrance, seemed to start from a reverie, during which he had been designing something of import:—"Radmore," he said to the man, "come hither—I have something to whisper into thy particular ear. I am here arrested for the murder of that man you see," he continued, lowering his voice as Radmore approached

him;—" you will—here—put your ear nearer to me." He then whispered something which made Radmore start—" Yes," said Falder, " be firm!—I may as well lose my life in this way as any other."

Here the police interposed, but it was too late; Radmore had received his instructions, and answered determinedly, that he would obey them; and the attention was here diverted by a herd of females, who now came into the cavern, some clamouring and talking, others half inebriated and singing, some quarrelling, but all joining now in one common chorus of a scream on seeing the police. They attempted to retreat, but two of the men ran up the ladder, and telling them they must all be removed to the station-house, brought them back. Meantime, Radmore had an opportunity of disengaging himself from the custody he was threatened

with, and rushed into an inner recess or vault of the kitchen (or cave), while Falder cried out to him—"You know the outlet—make your escape as fast as you can; meantime, 'do it' when you shall hear my signal—you understand!"

By the time these words were finished, the iron door which closed up this secret vault, or recess, into which Radmore escaped, had closed on the policemen that attempted to arrest his progress; seeing which Falder laughed insultingly at them. "Hah, hah! are you not content with having me for your prisoner? You can surely spare him!"

At this moment the bolts were heard to draw of the door that was the usual entrance to the cave, which was now closed on the other side; so that they were all prisoners, policemen and all—there was no egress.

"Thank thee, good Radmore," cried Falder.

"Now, then," he said insultingly to the police, "the life you would bid me sacrifice to the laws of my country is not the only one that shall be forfeited."

The men simultaneously asked what he meant.

"Radmore has closed every avenue of escape —there is none!—you shall know my meaning speedily." Then turning to Agatha, who gazed on him in mingled reproach and astonishment, "Come!" he cried, "you have complained of my deserting you in life—I will not so in death!" (seizing her hand as he spoke)—"give me that hand so long ago betrothed to mine."

"Betrothed? betrayed!" cried Agatha, as she struggled from his grasp without effect.

"Nay!" he continued, "I will grasp it with the clench of a fiend,—now come, terrible, desired Death!" (they all listened, meantime, in amazement, little imagining the catastrophe which

to be our own immolators, w
we would live is denied us!
females here set up a shriek
words, and asked what was al
"Those shrieks are music
he; "now, Radmore, for the
shall bid thee perform thy
he added, laughing again
officers of justice, "for the de
of the law!—Now will I glide
through the gates of terrible
too," looking fiercely at Aga
the way with me. No whinin
no regrets! but triumph be

And, saying these words, he drew hastily a pistol and discharged it; and the report was yet echoing through the vaults, when suddenly the foundations of the building were shaken, the flooring dashed up, the walls shattered to their base, and amidst an explosion, the noise of which drowned the shrieks of the women, who ran frantic to the farther corners of the spot, while flames darted round it, and gained more and more strength at every instant! The actors in this fearful scene had been dashed to pieces on the first burst of the explosion—their lifeless forms yet remained; a few, and those two or three of the women, only escaped; and this they effected through an aperture of the wall, which had given way from the shock occasioned by the explosion; they just managed to escape while the flames curled around the jagged orifice of the entrance. This particular spot was

where the private door into the "haunted house" (as we have called it) was said, some little time back, to be,—and through which Radmore, the instrument of the present catastrophe, came into the cave. After his escape through the vault, he had obeyed the injunctions of Falder, in setting fire to some barrels of gunpowder in a vault which ran directly under the kitchen or cave, as we have alternately termed it; this he did by lighting a train communicating with the gunpowder. Besides this, he was directed to set fire to some dry faggots which were heaped up in a kind of court a short distance from the usual entrance into the kitchen; the flame spreading soon burnt the door and the ladder staircase which led from it, and rapidly spread over the old wood wainscot which lined one wall of the kitchen, presenting a terrible back-ground of flame, while the terrors of the explo-

sion were manifested in all their fatal confusion in front. Meantime, where the wall of the house had given way, and where two or three unfortunate women had managed to effect their escape,—(while the greedy flames seemed stretching, as it were, to catch them)—amongst the forms that the lurid light illumined, one more majestic than the rest appeared, gazing with mingled terror and surprise where she stood on the scene of horror and confusion before her—it was Elvira.

CHAPTER

AN AWFUL PREDIC

Life hangs upon a thread——
The distance betwixt life and
Is little more than the poor p
Betwixt the crew and the hoar
That quarrel with it for the lif

And now, to account for E
she was. We have already
which her brother was, at
finding her missing. The fa

signed to her by the old woman who had brought her up, as having been those of her own mother, she was most distressed at the idea of losing a treasure so valuable, and so dear to her, especially a locket, already mentioned, which bore on it certain initials which she had recently discovered were those of her mother's maiden name; she therefore determined on going on the hazardous expedition of their recovery. To this effect she disguised herself "*à la Vidocq*," in male attire, as well as she could, and under this concealment effected her admission, without any questions, into the house by the back vault passage already described in an early part of these pages. She then lost no time in making her way up the staircase, which will also be remembered as communicating with the room she had occupied. The period at which she made this adventurous attempt was that just before

ing they had been part of the gang, and not imagining they were the officers of justice), when the *cortège* passed. She, meantime, heard the door again locked by one of the party that remained behind for that purpose, and she was now in despair of being able to effect her escape. All she could do was to return to the room she had occupied, where she hoped she might lurk uninterrupted until perhaps some happy opportunity of securing the key might possibly offer itself, as it was generally left hung up inside the grating. Accordingly, back she went. She was the more emboldened to hope she should not be discovered or molested, as it appeared that no one had come near the room since she had left it—or else how was it she had found her jewels safe, and other things?—She therefore consoled herself as well as she could; but she had not long remained where she was,

might) a shriek of dismay, f
as if the walls and roof of th
to fall on her. She lost no ti
staircase, nor did she perc
thrown away her disguise; b
of smoke were pouring up, an
reached the bottom, when sh
egress along the vaulted pa
grating blocked up by part
which had fallen in. The sh
now echoed in her ears. Sh
to proceed, and that was alo
of the passage, which led into

had not proceeded many steps, when she perceived the wall that separated this smaller branch of the passage from the cave, had given way,— and, thus, was laid open to her the frightful scene of terror and devastation which the explosion had occasioned;—and this was the critical moment in which we remember having seen her, while the unhappy women in the cave that yet remained alive, were endeavouring to escape to the spot on which she stood. Little comfort had they when they had clambered there,—for where was there any hope of egress? The avenues, both up the stairs and the passage that led to the grating, were both blocked up. Meantime the flames were gaining progress, and seizing more and more determinedly on the building. The wretched women, overawed by the superior composure of Elvira (who is indeed our heroine), looked up to her for consolation, or

as to any hope of escape she

"The whole way out is

you have escaped destructio

fear no other fate awaits u

way out!"

"None!" replied one of t

of agony.

"We shall be buried aliv

second.

The first of these women w

had been wounded severely

from a piece of stone, whic

during the explosion; she, a

here, had been the further

wounded, was obliged to lie down on the floor, and as she spoke raised herself on her elbow, or tried to do so, and again she expressed her anguish at the horrible destiny that appeared to await them.

"Merciful Heaven!" she exclaimed, "can we not, at least those of us who are less helpless than myself, try to remove away the rubbish of the shattered wall that blocks up our passage out, and so get to the grating that leads on the street?" And accordingly the two other females set to work to endeavour to perform this; but their strength was incapable of stirring the larger masses that intervened, and they gave up the attempt in despair.

"It is of no use trying!" exclaimed one of them; "that heap resists all my efforts to remove it;" and she wrung her hands in agony.

"I fear," said Elvira, "that all hope of escape is vain, my good friends; there is nothing

to lament to herself her hard fate, and separation from those to whom her affections turned.

"My dear, dear —— (she mentioned the name of some person to whom it appeared she was engaged) — I shall never see you again." On this she burst into a flood of tears.—"This was the last gift I had from him," she continued, looking at a shawl the unhappy creature had round her neck.

"Be comforted, be pacified," said Elvira; "lamentation is vain."

Here another of the women interposed—"Oh, dear lady, you speak unavailingly. How can we help lamenting?"

"To think," ejaculated a third, "I shall never see the light more, nor any friends I may have!—Will they think of their poor Catharine?"

"And mine, of me?" interposed another.

to the wretched creature that was lying on the floor, imprecating and lamenting,—venting grief and impatience by turns.

"To think," remarked one of the women, fixing her eyes in wonder on Elvira, "that you—a lady—you who have known the sweets of life, can part with them so calmly! You have shed no tear, while we—used to suffering—often driven to want—and insult,—we would still cling to life!"

"So would I willingly live, if it were the will of Heaven to permit me," said Elvira; "at the same time, whatever that will is, I resign myself to it. If you have had your distresses, I also have known mine. I place this, now, rather to the account of Mercy, that, by subjecting me to inflictions, has made me better able to feel for others."

"Oh! you are all goodness," exclaimed the

anxiety to meet the aid that was proffered them; but Elvira bade them remain on their knees, the more due as an acknowledgment that offended heaven had, in its mercy, listened to their prayers, and granted them. And now the efforts of the men were redoubled, and the great mass which had before resisted the feeble efforts of the women, gave way, at length, to the pick-axes of the men. Elvira could no longer restrain the feelings of intensity she had stifled during the trial, through which she had made up her mind for the worst—and, as Melmont rushed into the vault where she was, he had just time to save her from falling, as she rose to meet him.

"Dear, dear Elvira! I have found you! thanks to the mercy of Heaven! But there is no time to talk. Carry the women out," he continued, to the men who were his assistants. And with these words he instantly took Elvira

of the power of Heaven either to destroy or save. They promised, with tears in their eyes, and blessings on her, that they never should forget such a warning—or her example. As to the poor wretch, who had been driven by a bad-disciplined mind, and the pain of her wound, to exhibit so much impatience, Melmont, at his sister's desire, ordered her to be conveyed to the hospital, that her wound might be attended to; and, with a donation of money (for she was destitute), and advice to amend, he left her. Thus happily terminated this dreadful dilemma. Melmont, though he looked back with terror at the boldness of his sister's adventure, was yet happy that the jewels of his mother had been recovered, and were in her possession—but regained at what a hazard! He could not but admire her fortitude and enterprise, and admired her more from the testimonies the women bore

CHAPTER IX.

THE DEATH-BED—TALE OF A "POOR YOUNG AUTHOR."

Is it come to this?
Circumstance—rigid circumstance is too strong for thee.
THE BUFFETS OF FORTUNE.

OUR hero, having set his mind at rest in placing his sister in safety, bethought him now of his friend Gustavo; but before he went to see him, he remembered he owed poor Harvey a visit, and accordingly he went forthwith to find him out, and, if requisite, relieve him. With

come to see you. I am sorry to find you are not so well as I could wish."

"Nay," said the unhappy man, endeavouring to resume, as much as he could, his once characteristic gaiety, "you could not have found me better. I hope soon to be above all the mortifications that circumstance can impose upon us in this scene of contradiction, where it is well enough to live, if we feel we are permitted to do so for our own well-being and that of society; but otherwise, I fear life is but little desirable, and death is but the awaking to a better life."

He sank back, exhausted with the effort he had made to speak. Melmont sat down by his bed side, and silently dried the tears that stole down his cheeks, for a moment or two. He then regained composure to address his friend—

"Nay, don't permit yourself to talk thus

gress. I know well what the struggle of mind under such a difficult and unfair position of circumstances is. . . ."

Just at this moment the medical man entered the room. He bowed to Melmont, and, going up to the bed, asked the patient some questions in a low tone of voice, felt his pulse, and administered some medicine himself to him. He seemed a humane man, and Melmont thanked him (when he afterwards saw him) for his attentions to his friend. On being asked, as he was going out of the room, by Melmont how he found his patient, he shook his head and whispered, "Very weak—the effect of long harassing; the constitution too much gone to hope a recovery. Still, if the paroxysms do not recur, all may yet be recovered with proper treatment. But the mind—it is the mind that frets the body, here, too much—and has brought about the decay of

been, as I have just observed, a positively physical disorder induced by grief of mind. This is of a nervous nature, and attended with paroxysms, which, if they recur as violently as they did yesterday and last night, and which account for the extremely emaciated appearance of the patient, will, I think, terminate his sufferings."

The medical man then withdrew, Melmont telling him he should be glad to see him, to talk over his friend's case more with him at leisure. Meantime he returned to Harvey's bed-side: he had fallen into a slight doze after taking the medicine, which was of a sedative nature to allay the irritation of his complaint. Melmont sat in silence by the bed-side, contemplating with much mingled surprise and grief the altered features of the fine countenance of his once gay and clever college companion. He gazed on the face in a kind of reverie, his

then blame heaped on me for not surmounting difficulties, which better assistance would have permitted me, perhaps, to combat successfully, —for 'nothing can come of nothing'"—

Melmont nodded assent, while Harvey proceeded—

"I cannot look back on my unhappy and ill-fated career, without blaming (I regret to say so) one of all others who should be, and, in spite of his injustice, is dear to me, the author of my being—my own father. If a man's education often influences his lot in life, and his happiness and tone of mind through life, conceive what a reserve of evils did my education keep in store for me, when I was brought up with feelings and notions of much pride and fastidiousness, to be afterwards thrown into a condition of circumstances that would be perpetually galling these qualities and feelings,

question. The narrow-minded view which the special-pleading varlets of the law take of things, and which is the order of mind requisite for success in this career, was the last of the essentials I could bring to my assistance. My mind was too lofty, and the success I obtained (though always anonymously) in the arena of letters, to which I was driven by my distresses, pretty well certifies, in fact, that my talents were not of the order for this routine, nor my natural and habitual qualifications. But what is more, I had no acquisitions either, which were necessary for my success. I was driven into a profession resting on technicalities, without ever having had a proper 'imbuing' or education in these very essential points of preparation, —without which no talents—not the greatest—can make their way. Not only this, but I had no means to meet the great expenses this routine

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embraced offers on repeated occasions, had it not been from the disgusting want of circumstances I was always doomed to labour under. I therefore lost, through the inability to embrace these longed-for offers, the assistance of the great statesman who voluntarily offered himself as my patron; but whenever I should have wished to have availed myself of the offer, I was denied the means which it was necessary to have, to accept of what was offered; for, let me tell you, few places are dispensed in the patronage of a minister where there is not some outlay necessary to enable the person offered any office to accept it, so that from this cause I lost preferment in the paths my turn of mind directed me to pursue. I might have been a rich man by this time, had I possessed the opportunity of embracing handsome offers; but I was too proud to borrow in order to do so,—and was denied assistance by

equal success; a poor 'wight' of an author is left in a disagreeable predicament when the remuneration for his labour is not forwarded at once, or his production possibly put altogether aside: such a state of existence is harassing enough. All, however, I required of my friends was, that they should not blame me without making the allowances or excuses for me which my peculiar situation required; their injustice in not doing so, it was, that grieved me. This alone was sufficient to wear me out with vexation. My pride, however, sustained a still greater and severer blow in the circumstance that what little means I had came not from my own father, but from some wealthy, jealous, and haughty friends, who, rather than exercise their interest to gain me some 'place' or occupation,—which they easily might have done from their rank and influence,—were content rather to make me feel my depend-

and at length—I am what I am. Meantime, the clamours raised against me for not pursuing my profession ran at full tide, when my state of mind and body was such, that I was rendered utterly unable to apply my mind to any such pursuit. It was one, however, that, if I had been duly educated for it, I could have pursued, I think, after a time, with less repugnance. I judge by the first time I ever conducted a cause, —the *éclât*, in truth, with which I acquitted myself. But I became disappointed in having no further encouragement till about eighteen months after, when I was so disgusted and mortified at not having been employed through so long a time, that it was all I could do to prevail on myself to conduct the case; and this I did in a sort of tempest of suppressed indignation, and consequently did not acquit myself with that calmness and composure absolutely necessary to

in a tumult of desperation, that my struggles were in vain. But the inconsistency of my father was beyond anything glaring and cruel; he had all his life cramped my energies, damped my ambition, thrown obstacles in my way of ever acquiring anything like independence, by refusing offers on my behalf which might have eventually made me independent; he had been jealous of my ever distinguishing myself, and all for the sake of saying, 'He is not equal to his father.' Wretched, paltry satisfaction! and as unnatural as wretched! Well, as such was the case, one would have imagined my low circumstances, and the frustration of my wishes in rescuing myself from the condition I was in, would consequently have gratified him, as being the legitimate fruit of his conduct towards me; but no—his abuse and insult of me for not 'getting on,' as he called it, and my stating the

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temples (for the pains had seized the head), the sufferer obtained a little rest. Melmont, whilst he was asleep, told the medical man he was obliged to go, as Mrs. Melmont expected him home, and would be alarmed if he did not return; and said he would renew his visit at as early an hour the next morning as possible, or even the same night, in spite of the assurances of the medical man, that he hoped the patient would be better after the bleeding.

friend. "My dear Harvey," he said,—but was unable to articulate more—and pressed the hand of the dying man.

"I am happy," said Harvey, faintly. "It is merciful in Heaven to come thus to my aid ....I have long wished for this crisis.... my life has too long hung.... on an uncertain thread.... which I wished broken.....When there is nothing permitted one for which one would wish to live.... death is happiness!" These were the last words poor Harvey uttered. He leaned back on his pillow, his eyes fixed on his friend—he tried to articulate some words, probably in thanks to him for his attention, but was unable to find utterance; his lips, however, were seen to move.... and now his eyes were turned up towards heaven, and a smile seemed to light up his faded countenance, as if some inward communings with better spirits

leave of the spot, saying that he would satisfy every demand, both for rent and attendance, which had now been accruing for some time. He signified also his intention of seeing the last sad obsequies performed, and then, with a heavy heart, left the spot and returned home.

pathy for the sufferings of Harvey. He was lost in reflection for some time, and in melancholy recollections of what he himself had suffered—when, banishing these thoughts, he said abruptly—

"A happy fellow you are, Melmont! blessed with a wife so lovely, so amiable, so intelligent, so calculated to make the married state happy! Ah! there is one with whom I too could have been happy!" Melmont, though he thought his friend was probably alluding to the memory of Fornarina, turned away this melancholy impression by bringing him back to the happier recollections of his "first flame," Louise.

"Come, come," he answered, "your head is running on the old story of that French sorceress, Louise! Why, man, don't despair!—you will find her again! or if not, there are other Louises to be found in the world."

equal the passages in the chapter of reality,—in all the images of fiction!"

"No! because in fiction you are obliged to keep the probable rigidly in view, or you offend the reader; while in real life many things occur that force you to acquiesce in their truth,—very often because they are too extravagant even for fiction!"

"Or, at any rate, fiction that would be tolerated."

In this manner our worthies chatted as they proceeded to Melmont's residence; and when arrived there, he was scarcely on the landing-place of the staircase, and about to enter the drawing-room with his friend, when Gustavo's ears were saluted with the notes of the very song he was so fond of playing on the guitar, and which Melmont had overheard him playing at Birdlip,

mont remained on the top landing-place, surprised to see what new adventure was about to spring up now! Meantime Gustavo hurried into the *boudoir*. It *was* the spot whence the sounds proceeded,—yet more, it was Louise herself by whom they were uttered!

"Ah! my ear—my heart—could never be mistaken!—Louise! Louise! it is your own Gustavo has found you again."

These words were scarcely heard with distinctness by Melmont, but the shriek that escaped the lady, on the unexpected appearance of her former lover, did not escape him. He was now all impatience to witness the scene,—he hastened to the spot of this happy recognition, as much astonished as the principal actors in it. Little did he imagine that the Louise, whose vision had haunted his friend so long and constantly, was no other than Elvira herself! His joy was

"I had never expected to find you again, dear Louise!" exclaimed Gustavo; "and now, to be certain I shall never lose you again, let me beg the consent of your brother here to give me permission that I may ask you henceforth to let me call you mine? Our hearts, Louise, have not been separated, though our steps have!—we have been partners in misfortune, I well know, and that will bind us the more closely in affection." Elvira wiped away a tear that stole down her cheek,—and Melmont, silently putting her hand into that of his friend, and uttering the brief word of prayer that Heaven might bless them, hurried away to afford Alice this new intelligence. The joy of the whole party was unbounded, when they met together with mutual congratulations on each other's happiness. Gustavo, who a little time ago had witnessed the happiness his friend possessed, in his marriage with Alice,

to that of a marriage,—it was the mournful one of performing the last sad obsequies of his friend. Gustavo perceived his grief, and insisted on participating in it; and on Melmont's letting him know the nature of it, generously determined to be present at the mournful ceremony himself. "Grief," he said, "is more familiar to me than joy! Joy, too, is so fleeting and capricious. It is well, perhaps, that this memento of grief has presented itself at this moment. Elvira," he said, turning to his intended bride, "excuse the sadness that comes over me:" he added—"I wish to accompany your brother to the funeral of poor Harvey,—a friend of his. I should be unhappy, my love, to see him mourning and not participate in his grief—now doubly my friend and brother."

Elvira much approved of his intention, and, asked, with concern, some of the circumstances of

CHAPTER XII.

THE LAST OFFICES OF FRIENDSHIP.

His saltem accumulem donis et fungar inani
Munere. VIRG.

C. These betoken a mind much disturbed.
L. Ay! because much wronged.
THE RETRIBUTION.

"WHAT, no friend, no relative—none besides ourselves," said Gustavo, "to attend the last sad ceremony? Too often, when neglect has been shown to a person during his life, decency has suggested an atonement, though a late one

memory. The medical gentleman also attended the ceremony, and after it was over, he returned with Melmont to the humble lodging of his departed friend, and told him all the injunctions of poor Harvey. Property he had none to leave, except one or two MSS., with one of which a paper was left, purporting that it was sold to a publisher; but, as the money was to be received three months hence, the author might meantime have starved before any relief was afforded him. The sum, whenever it was paid, he wished to be given to a poor widow lady, for whom he had done as much out of his wretched means as they would allow him:—he had given his mite, and rescued her and her child from beggary, and perhaps from shame. Melmont and his friend were much affected as the medical man related this, for there was no memorandum to intimate any such act of generosity on the

desponding mood of the author;—works begun and unfinished in despair or debility of health, weariness of spirit, and exhaustion of that vigour and buoyancy requisite to animate labour with a view to perfecting its projects; so that all those papers that could be made nothing of Melmont burnt, those that he thought might be reserved he put aside for future inspection. He could not help feeling unhappy; and Gustavo, and Mr. ——, the medical attendant, were equally affected, as various loose scraps of paper were seen with reflections scrawled desultorily on them, as if the person writing had sought to buoy up his spirits by any encouraging sentiments that might come across him at the time, and endeavoured, by remembering them, to disguise if possible his real distress of mind. Amongst these scraps were the following:—

Death—never be afraid of,—it is as natural and necessary to die as to live;—it is a relief. Look towards it cheerfully—longingly . . . .

We talk of liberty—what, of limb? If the mind is shackled—if circumstance circumscribe us—we are as much prisoners as if we were confined between four walls . . . .

How can I be happy—who can dance in chains? . . . .

I never knew what it was to have a home . . . .

I am the victim of jealousy and . . . .

* * * *

But not to give any more instances of the disturbed and diseased state of mind and feeling of the late sufferer,—Melmont, after he had performed these duties, took leave of the medical man, telling him where to send his account, and satisfying the woman of the house for rent and attendance. He returned home with Gustavo, ordering a packet of the MSS. of poor Harvey to be sent after him. Nor did he lose any time in obeying his injunction as to conveying the profits of the MS. (which was marked as dis-

with many tears she h
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In fact, she said, if he h
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should not want, he told h
small cottage rent-free, of
and that, meantime, she

absence in the country. This proposal she received with increased gratitude; and Melmont left her silently calling down a blessing on his head, amidst the tears she was unable to repress. In looking over the papers of his late friend there was one which he could not read without being affected, at the same time that its character was entertaining; it was an effort on the part of poor Harvey to fly from sorrow and amuse himself at his own expense, in a ludicrous survey of his own denials as a poor gentleman, a condition the least enviable of any in this world of mortifications. As the reader might probably share Melmont's feelings on the subject, and might be curious to see the paper, a sight of this one, out of the whole number, shall be afforded him. It runs as follows; and though it may appear somewhat in the

then it ran.

CHAPTER XIII.

PATHOS AND BATHOS; OR SKETCH OF A "POOR GENTLEMAN."

Nay, would'st thou have Misfortune fly thee—mock her!

CITIZEN OF THE WORLD.

. . . . "Now, we might" (so ran the fragment) "in this 'sage history,' as saith old Hamet Benengeli, have endeavoured to pratise on the 'finer feelings' of the sensitive reader; we might have made our motto to this chapter the thesis of a touching appeal on the bitter condition of

However, the character we are about to describe is as little inclined to maunder and whine over his denials as the reader would be to condole with him if he did. With a nonchalance of the best breeding, he sets Fortune and Misfortune at defiance—obdurate imp, he smiles at her frowns! she is unable to subdue him! her spell is his jest; and if you wish for proof of this, listen to the reflections of our independent-minded 'poor gentleman,' as he soliloquised, in strolling down the street, much in the following vein:—

"'What a thing it is to take things easily. Thank heaven, my constitution (or 'organisation,' as the expression now-a-days is) has not rendered me fretful and desponding! What a happy situation am I in,' he continued, smiling to himself, 'for writing a new series of letters in the Zimmermann, Werter, or Rousseau

him a surprising appetite for dinner, as he discovers when he comes more to himself. The shadows of evening are now creeping on, or deep set—as it may be summer or winter—congenial with the shadows of his spirit, and warning his stomach that the hour for sustenance and society is arrived! Of these two requisites for well-being (the first for saving us to ourselves and our friends—the second, for giving our friends the benefit of our preservation), he thinketh not so much of the last—viz. 'society,' as of 'sustenance'—or, in more familiar language, 'dinner;' he feeleth, with an earnest resolution to spend all he hath—heart and soul in the cause—in his pocket!—he is on the very threshold of an hotel, renowned for its cookery—a favourite resort in times past of more overflowing means, and ere their surplus strength had been poured into the 'savings-bank' at

case, of comparatively little use, which he hath remaining! He diveth into another pocket —what happeneth he on here?—The key of a bureau scrapes against his fingers—a bureau, in which he remembers he hath a certain brace of pistols—and he curseth himself that they have not, ere this, saved him the trouble of coming so far for a dinner, with so slender a chance of getting at it! He gropeth still in his pocket—indefatigably gropeth he! What luck awaits his honest efforts? The balance of change out of money paid for a bill is at last brought up; and this reminds him, somewhat untowardly, of every other bill he has been dunned to 'settle' for the last eighteen months? . . . What shall he do? He can spare little beyond what it costs for such a meal as gave Otway his quietus—a roll, not to say a crust of bread . . . . the idea of a gentleman dining on a crust of bread! it wringeth his

Bourdeaux or Burgundy—no, nor even with the beverage of invalids, sherry, nor sloe-black Oporto! What shall he do? Chance, happy chance, befriends him! In comes a dear friend, and, by the by, a richer one than he, and not yet 'broken down' (a boon companion within no very long time ago, of our *infortuné*). 'Ah! my dear ——,' cries the friend, 'how happy I am to have fallen in with you! What! are you dining alone? do let me join you.... Waiter, what have you ready? Bring in some soup....You've not done dinner?' he continues, turning to his friend, who replies most convivially, 'he is ready to begin again, not having proceeded far!'....'Waiter' departs—a new impulse is given him—the soup speedily appears—the flow of soul pours its genial current forth- our *infortuné* is now himself again! The ice of misfortune is thawed in his bosom for a time—there

tion of spirit, he intends to allow his friend to settle a large balance or 'set off' in the *materiel* to be paid for! Dinner now over, his friend wishes much to look in at the Opera—the ballet has not yet quite begun—Taglioni is to dance —they will be in time perhaps to hear the end of the Opera—perhaps a *bravura 'finale'* (as in the Donna del Lago) of Sontag, ere she became the Countess Rossi; or, a yet greater inducement exists in some concluding passage of the Semiramide by Pasta. Well! the friend goes up to dress—our *infortuné* regrets he cannot accompany him 'this evening.' The waiter is little attentive as to the disbursement of the bill—he 'knows the gentlemen,'—and one of them is in 'the house'—and our *infortuné* walks with much *nonchalance* out of doors. The 'friend' is gone up to dress, and his late companion proceeds (in the artificial elevation of spirits yielded by champagne and

pulse hath lost its sway over him! The inspiration of champagne hath evaporated in groping through the dingy '*terra incognita*' that so forcibly recals him to his real condition and his self-disgust! He is at the door of his den—it is opened by an aged tatterdemalion, slatternly, dishevelled, and dirty hostess—some old Irishwoman: she holdeth a greasy japanned kitchen candlestick in shrivelled and dirt-begrimed paw—the 'dip' (that is, the candle) o'erhanging brim, and tallow bedewing or besmearing the dirty deal of the floor. She lights him up the narrow staircase, whose affectation of furniture is a worn-out carpeting, with many a yawning rent, where the iron rods have through years past borne the appearance of retaining it to the steps. Our *infortuné* hath at length found his level! At the top of the staircase he stands before the door of his den—

half dung,' as Pope pourtrays them, but their appearance is little more prepossessing—little more demonstrative of happy fortune. The lath is, indeed, seen occasionally, in envious rent, through the tattered and smoke-stained papering; a patch of blue sugar-paper perchance hides sundry crannies of this kind, and giveth a piebald and motley appearance to the walls, convincingly emblematic of the chequered fortunes of the occupant's vicissitudes in life! A murmur of the night-breeze sighs not the most encouraging tune—it warns him he hath broken a pane of glass in the window, of which he hath not wherewithal to repay the damage! and must e'en shiver—but this he spurns and scorns to do! What doth he? He rammeth drawers and silk stockings, or cotton — therein; and brooding in melancholy attitude over his loaded pistols, he much doubteth whether he shall not let

panion at the hotel. Again he bethinks him—he hath both imagination and information—can delineate character—is not too dull to be incapable of making a plot.... ay! a good romance may assist his revenues. He slinks into his wretched couch—he sleeps disturbedly—he dreams a tremendous plot—he awaketh, and is about to put his thoughts on paper—alas! he finds he hath not a sheet left!—He comforteth himself with the intention of procuring some, and setting about his romance immediately, as soon as he can creep abroad. He doth so—he is supplied with paper and a grey goose-quill—he sitteth down to commit his thoughts to paper; but wo betide the untoward causes of delay—his thoughts, for want of being arrested at the time, have evaporated, and he searcheth for his romance in vain, or, at any rate, so much less vividly than he

sendeth out for a slice or two of cold meat, —it cometh—it only disgusts him, and brings all the mortifying circumstances of his condition before him! Where are now the spacious and handsome rooms he once had, when he came to town to make the 'season' fly faster by the mercurial impulse his spirit gave it?—where the merry bachelor parties he used to give on those occasions?—where the "circumstance" of lackeys, of china, of plate?—where the savoury viands,—fosterers of joyous vitality,—he was wont to share? Alas! echo may answer 'where?' through those bare and melancholy walls! He regards with disgust the fare before him; nature, however, says he must e'en address himself to it for want of better;—he doth so, though with reluctance. He now endeavours to console himself for the shortness of his commons by reflections on the length of his pedigree,

his peculiar friend, as he was before, when he was rich; but his grace and he have been obliged to let each other's acquaintance 'slip by,' and 'sink,' since. Every thing is now joy, and splendour, and revelry around him, when suddenly a rap is heard at his door.—Is it the 'bailiff?' No! the bailiff can't invade his 'castle!' He is yet safe! Who is it intrudes on his solitude and disturbs the delights —the only delights he possesses—of his fancy? —who is it disturbs him thus unfeelingly and untowardly? It is a shrivelled old woman with a small bundle in her hand, and on the top of it pinned a small bill;—it is the laundress. 'If you plase, sir' (the lady is Irish), 'here's yur linen, and thank yur honour to pay the last three weeks' small account for washing. My poor husband (rest his soul!) is dead, yur honour, since I saw you, and I've nothing to

blubbereth;—yet hoping for comfort from such a generous customer.

"'My good ma'am—ahem—your tears affect me to the very heart's core. What did your husband die of? Here are five shillings to comfort yourself withal, with the liquor your heart loves best, or to pay for masses, if you prefer it. Do not talk of the bill, that I will pay another day;—these five shillings, meanwhile, I make you a clear present of.'

"'Bless your honour's heart,' interposeth Mrs. O'Flanagan.

"'Well, what did your husband die of?—and where is he to be buried?—or where *is* he buried? I'll give you an epitaph for him, which shall cost you nothing but thanks!'

"'Oh, thank you, sirrh, for giving me anything. What is an epi . . . . ?'

"'Epitaph, Mrs. O'Flanagan, is the saying

"'A pavior and rammer, yur honour, ivery day of the week, Sundays nat excipted.'

"'A pavior and rammer! Ah! a good sturdy business. Well, here's an epitaph for him.

I've drunk my last dram, nor shall more pave or ram,
And at length my spirit at ase is,
Where I sleep my long doze, and turn up my nose
At dull earth and the roots of the daisies.

There! there is nothing more to be said of your good man; so good morning to you, Mrs. O'Flanagan.' With which words our *infortuné* sheweth the said dame the way down stairs, trusting she may not mistake it, or delay making it, and commence on the inharmonious strain of the bill again. He is, in this instance, fortunate. She departeth, comforted in the assurance that her next visit will be greeted with the payment of all her little dues; muttering which prayer to herself, she betaketh herself away,

him. He sallies forth—'shabby genteel,' avoiding conspicuity as much as he can, and conspicuous regions. He stoopeth in his gait, and boweth his head to escape detection, as if suffering from some complaint in the chest, which admits of his hand being drawn over his bosom somewhat to veil the shabbiness of the breast-buttons of his surtout, and the somewhat well-worn and russet hue of the once black silk stock. In going along he sees a favourite cab-horse, once his own, and lately disposed of at Tattersall's. Everything reminds him of what he was and what he is! He looks askance at Crockford's as he slinks down St. James's Street, just to slide into his club (somewhere in that street), and see what cards have been left for him. No one knows where he resides. It is dusk,—the hour he slinketh abroad;—most of

right!—all his own fault,' would sometimes carry on the strain. Meanwhile poor ——— slinks back to his lodging, with the determination, next day, of borrowing some money and making 'a desperate push' to obtain 'the widow.' The morrow comes—he sallieth forth, big with this project—when, alas! scarcely hath he stepped beyond the threshold of his abode when his Quixotism is arrested by the malignant tap of the bailiff, by whose kind attention and diligence, he is conveyed in a hackney-chariot to a sponging-house; in some obscure region, dingy as Erebus, and about as difficult to escape from. From thence, since no kind friend is forthcoming in the interim to relieve his burdens, he proceedeth, as naturally as a Catholic soul, from purgatory to the devil (if he is ultimately found unfit for heaven); he pro-

world doth—in ‘ the lure

* * *

CHAPTER XIV.

A PEEP AT LIFE FROM BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

Sure he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and god-like reason
To rust in us unused.

HAMLET.

MELMONT had scarcely finished perusing the foregoing paper, than a parcel was delivered into his hands by Fleuret, who informed him, the chief of the police had left it from Starling. Melmont immediately desired to see him, and learnt from him the account of Starling's

from Sir Jasper, requiring his daughter and son-in-law to come down again to Cheltenham, in order to join him subsequently on his journey back to Lentworth. The old man received an answer saying, that his request would be complied with shortly, but that some business of importance, and unexpected at the present moment, had arisen, which would probably delay our hero a fortnight or more, but that the moment he was at liberty, he would hurry down to Lady Lentworth and himself. The letter that conveyed this answer, also conveyed the happy news of Melmont's sister being betrothed to his friend Gustavo, whose nuptials were to be celebrated at Cheltenham. Sir Jasper was requested to give the bride away, which he was overjoyed at the thought of doing, when the request reached him. Before, however, the happy meeting at Cheltenham takes place, the promise must be

me some assistance through its mazes! As I am fond of 'beginning at the beginning,' perhaps you would give me a starting point, whence to set out."

"I will let you know then; I will let you into the secret of knowing what is most interesting in this 'world's epitome.' The outward show, and all that the vulgar gape at, is the last thing to consider, except, indeed, as presenting so many monuments of the wealth and enterprise of the country; but it is behind the curtain you must look,—it is to the intrigues of society."

"Do you understand by this, the intrigues of public or private life?"

"Of both: those of public life, of course, demand the highest degree of attention, as being the most important; but sometimes those of private life have a public object in their view,—as a political connexion, a promotion, a favour at court,—and different items of this nature, of

"A question it will not be very difficult for any one to answer,—a seat in parliament, which, however, is a ticket which a good many (as I have witnessed with derision and contempt) do not know how to use,—and then they had better be anywhere than in parliament. These are mere clowns, dolts, and greenhorns. I would not give a fig for a man without he had a talent for intrigue, that is to say, if he is to play a part on the worldly arena of life. As to the respect I may have for him for being above this, and above worldly interests and speculations, I will say nothing. I only speak of him as taking a part in the business of life, and the subjects of interest recognised by the active part of society. Oh! the delight of manœuvre and counter-manœuvre,—the throwing an enemy on a false scent,—the happy 'ruse' that trepans him like a spring trap,—the temporising,—the

"You certainly present to me a very interesting topic of consideration."

"But mark me,—I again repeat, that it is not every one that has the ticket of admission to the theatre where this drama is best enacted,—nor has talent, address, *finesse*, *espieglerie*, to take a part in the business, or even perceive that its enactment is going on, much less scent out its drift, and follow eagerly on the track,—now giving tongue when the game is fresh on the wind—now straining in anxious silent energy to get upon the successful track. Oh! what would I give to be now making one in the bustle, the plot, the heat of the action! I am but a cipher in society,—and who is *not* so, who has not the ticket, the admission to be an actor in this absorbing game, by being in Parliament? In Opposition or Government, it is all one as far as the interest I speak of is concerned; of the two

tion in my favourite game,—there are those I can *assist* if I am not publicly recognised as an actor .... But to speak a little now of the intrigue of private life, from my own experience, and this I trust I may do without being egotistical, for no man has a right so well to speak on a subject, as one who has had actual experience in it."

"Certainly so,—I am all attention."

"Well, I really think I can tell you the 'private history' of almost every family worth knowing anything about; the intermarriages and the marriage misfortunes, — the 'breed, seed, and generation,' as jockeys say, of every being who is 'anybody,' or 'somebody,' in the social sphere; there is scarcely, in fact, a good coat of arms that I can't tack a 'family story' to, forthwith!"

"Verily, this is an amusing talent!"

"It is so to a great extent. On the other

"To be sure I do! it gratifies my conceit! We English are such a proud domineering race, that it is not enough to be loved amongst us; to have any sway, a man must be dreaded; I speak rather harshly of our character, but it is the truth. I speak advisedly, and not without having studied the character I delineate."

"Yet, Melmont, you do not appear a kind of person to make yourself disliked, or at least dreaded."

"Oh, you need not be disliked exactly, although 'dreaded!'—You may hold a rod over the heads of many, and yet appear—and actually be—so agreeable, insinuating, amiable, and courtier-like, that the world can't help giving you its approbation and a flattering character! Nay, when persons find you have as much sway over others, as themselves, they will take a pride in courting you, for people value you a good

tion of those who stand in awe of their possible exertion."

"Exactly! and here comes the contrast; the petty-minded, and mean-spirited, will make use of this power if they possess it; they are dreaded and hated: the man who abstains, therefore, from making use of a dangerous power, may reasonably be praised, and a show made of admiring him, though secretly he is dreaded; and this last 'predicament' is my ambition and boast on the stage of 'private life;'—this is the character I would have as a 'courtier.'"

"I see now what it is to be acquainted with London; it is to be acquainted with *character* to know the sources of ascendancy and importance in society."

"Precisely! you don't know life, or London, for they may be used as synonymous terms here, unless you are the thorough '*diplomat*' in

were calculated to induce, as resorts for lounging away the time. "Nay," said Melmont, "it is past a joke, to see how many 'heads of families,' as they are called, become undomesticated and comparatively savage, by sequestering themselves everlastingly in the wilds of a club-house! They are never at home! always at the 'club,'—I am sick of the monotony of the term. The family that excites their main interest, is the family of newspapers and magazines, whilst that at home is comparatively forgotten! In fact, for burying men alive, turning them into a kind of lay monks, and as a seminary for the forming a set of bores, quizzes, and old bachelors, there never was any thing like a 'club.'"

Gustavo joined Melmont in the laugh with which he accompanied this reflection. "Of course," he added, "I do not speak too sweepingly, in my application, but only with reference

CHAPTER XV.

A QUESTION WORTH ANSWERING.

Learning was first made pilot to the world . . .

* * * * *

But is it now, that he hath lost his wits?
And, ever since, liv'd zany to the world,
Turn'd pageant-poet, touter to the press,
Made himself cheap? . . . .
Do, then, mere shadows sully and deform
The substance, worthier both in sense and soul?

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

"I HAVE been informed," said Gustavo (to continue the subject which the conclusion of the last chapter was proceeding to)—"I have been

satisfactorily solved as they perhaps can be, and society reposes on these truths, and has become impatient of any weightier productions on the old theses. Besides this, the press has, by degrees, disseminated such a variety of topics through the channel of the mere journals of the day,—that the mind of the public has been rendered informed with, and alive to, a great *variety* of subjects. This, to a certain extent, disables it from applying the same degree of fixed attention to any protracted dissertation on any *single* point. Hence it is, that you have not, now, weighty volumes, as formerly, on a particular head; but I do not admit that hence it is to be argued that the literary character has degenerated. You will see the most important and interesting remarks and observations in the compass of an 'article,' which form an instance quite strong enough to vindicate the character of

that is,—the talent, is equal; and the matter equally nourishing. Besides, as you said before, the greater problems in moral and natural philosophy having been solved, and the public mind reposing on these, it likes to see the principles already discovered brought into play by practical application to the topics which they may illustrate, and which yield this opportunity as they arise."

"You mention another very just reason," said Melmont. "Again, if the 'matter' of the literary remarks of the present day is not degenerate, certainly the 'manner' is not! Witness the beauty, force, and perspicuity with which subjects are treated in almost every newspaper you take up. Lord Byron remarked that many a 'leading article' was equal to Junius; in fact, 'style' is now so general in writing, that everybody almost is a writer, and has formed his style

the month by twelve, that of the quarter by four, you will give him an aggregate of intelligence by the end of the year that will make him quite a different being in the scale of rational animals and thinking creatures!"

"You fully convince me," said Gustavo, "of the inanity of the charge of literary degeneracy, in your country, at the present day! You have given me a picture of the quality, quantity, and diffusion of intelligence quite unparalleled! But I should like to ask, Suppose any great discovery in philosophy to be made, would the restless habit of mind of the reading public give it the due attention that it would deserve?"

"I see what is passing in your mind. You perhaps think that a spirit of discovery in science is more inert than it used to be, perhaps, from despairing of sufficient attention being paid to its labours. If this be really the case it is a

offered to the public in a style, and through a channel, suited to its taste. The consequence is, that the philosopher, far from having met with disregard—having failed to excite attention—and left to obscurity, is brought before the world in a multiplied amount of five or six thousand to one! For such is the circulation of the periodical, that it carries his researches all over the world while his own work would scarcely have travelled into more than the confined circuit of the closets of a few literati and savans! Do not let research then, or philosophy, be dispirited. If it has anything worthy to advance, it will meet with its full share of applause and publicity; and if it is in error, its detection, for the good of the public, will be also the more widely and summarily exhibited."

"You have quite satisfied my mind as to what I was in error upon as to the subject of English

suppose it was this that gave me the erroneous idea I had formed of the degeneracy of English literature."

"Oh! this charge could only apply to the lighter literature of the day, and the worst specimens even of that! and invariably in the instance of persons who had no claim to appear in a literary character. It is true that there has, in the worst specimens of novel writing, been a good deal of vapid pretension exhibited, and a good deal of affected importance, but this has been invariably repudiated; and, as an instance of this not being just as a general charge, take the best specimens of lighter literature—of the novels, of which we are now speaking, and you will find they were indebted for their success to the display of intelligence which they exhibited, —and the spirit and force with which remarks and sentiments were put into the mouths of the

the buildings along the Regent's Park, than with anything else he witnessed during his ride. The Kensall-Green cemetery—the gas-works—the docks—the mint—were amongst others of the better objects of curiosity that Melmont lionised his foreign friend over. The houses of Parliament were, of course, not sitting now,—or the period which our pages record, and its dialogues of idleness, would not be called the "Recess."

In the evening Melmont took the opportunity of introducing Gustavo to all the most eminent characters of the day, at a large party of wits at the house of a literary lady, who drew somewhat upon the good nature of her friends in inflicting on them the hearing a tragedy of five acts, her own composition, and read by her with due emphasis and feeling. Gustavo made many clever and interesting acquaintances, but not all

CHAPTER XVI.

HAPPY MEETINGS, HAPPY UNIONS, HAPPY COUPLES, HAPPY DEPARTURES.

—— What more's to come.
Oh—something, yet—a not unpleasing turn
In fortune's pranks.
Nay then, I'll quarrel not,
So the surprise be happy.
THE RESCUE.

IF the meeting which now took place between the Count and Countess Vasari was pleasing, it was also painful. She had by this time joined the Count at Cheltenham, together with Gus-

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was glad to permit a subject so unpleasant to the Count, to terminate, is no less due to be stated of her; all, in fact, that she had said on the subject, was at his own suggestion. The interception of her letters, by which Vasari was prevented being acquainted with the designs of his brother-in-law, did not, least of all, demand a painful notice, and require regretful mention. It was no wonder that the Count, when he met Melmont at Kenilworth, told him he was surprised he had no tidings of the Countess!—all was now explained.

Gustavo's impatience increased every day to see Elvira. Sir Jasper, too, began to enter into his feelings, and to be fidgetty for the happy ceremony to take place,—two or three letters in his characteristic style reached Melmont, urging him not to delay. It should be mentioned also, that the Count Vasari made over to his son,

prevail upon them all to come and dine with him too. Sir Jasper, when he received this message said, "well, he was always a domineering and whimsical rogue, and must have his way, he supposed!"—so sent his compliments to his Lordship, whom Melmont assured him was so much his friend, that he wished to be the friend of all connected with him. So accordingly it was settled that the Lentworths, young Gustavo, and his father, should meet Melmont, his lady and sister, at this worthy nobleman's. The hour of dinner arrived,—and the guests arrived not more than half an hour after it.—Where, however, was Melmont? "The rogue is late," said Sir Jasper, "and I am hungry: there is no virtue better than punctuality after all."

He was continuing to harangue, by way of filling out the time, and giving vent to a little hungry impatience, when Lord and Lady Car-

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them entered Elvira, ar
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Baronet. "Is this a triel
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mother),—"what, do you

I had not a right. I thought the surprise, perhaps, might amuse you, and it was for that reason alone I did not communicate this circumstance sooner; for I am, generally speaking, an enemy to all surprises whatever,—in joke or in earnest. But to relate to you how it is that I bear this style, it is thus:—you are aware of the dormant claim, as I always supposed there was, in my family, to this title, though I hesitated much about the possibility of its ever being reclaimed by my branch of it. My grandfather and father had both been deterred from claiming it,—the first because, when he was living, there was a relative of an elder branch,—the one remaining of it whose business it was to "claim." The distresses, however, into which this person fell from dissolute habits, gambling, and horse-racing, reduced him so much, that he said, rather than urge his claim, he would remain as he was, un-

left him, which bore testimony of the illegitimacy of the person I just now spoke of, and consequently establishing clearly my father's claim. These documents were, (as all my father's papers were,) in the hands of that scoundrel, Falder, who was his agent,—managed all his business,—took advantage of his weakness,—and would have defrauded him and me of much property, and, in time, of this claim into the bargain; but the same motives that actuated Starling (his then confidential secretary and friend), in preserving his will from destruction, also made him preserve these documents. The moment they came to my hand, I lost no time in vindicating and asserting my claim; I have been presented at Court on having come to the title,—and have now presented myself and your daughter before you and Lady Lentworth to ask your blessing on us."

"Ay, ay, you were the wiser of the two," said Sir Jasper, "as ladies mostly are, and you are blessed too with patience,—which, I fear, we men cannot boast much of."

"I am sure," said the Count, "I know one here that is not blessed with much patience, and that is my son, who has been counting the hours, the minutes, till he should meet this lady," looking at Elvira.

"Ah, is it so?" said the bluff baronet, "come then, as I am to give the bride away, let me here give him and my daughter (for so I shall call her), my daughter Elvira, my blessing——"

Just at this moment, dinner was announced, though not so suddenly, but that Sir Jasper led Elvira to Gustavo who imprinted a kiss on her hand, while the less ceremonious baronet saluted her heartily on the cheek; and now they all went down to dinner, the happiest party that

warmth of heart and of true friendship, natural to him, to fly and congratulate Melmont, and form one of the happy party. He did not lose time to realise all he thus desired; he was known to the Count: and all were delighted to see him,--his good-nature and liveliness constituting him a universal favourite. The evening now stole on, and music and dancing succeeded, in the midst of which appeared the Countess Vasari and her niece, on whom all eyes were turned as she entered the room, but by none more so than by Raverton. He could scarcely believe his eyes, when he discerned in the person of the lovely creature who now entered with her aunt, no other than Malvina herself! To meet her so unexpectedly, when he had but a short time ago expressed to Melmont, that he considered her lost to him for ever,—that he should never see her again! Thus suddenly to be blessed

her part, been not less hurt at his apparent neglect than he had been at the idea of her having forgotten him. She had, during and since the period referred to, been absent from Bologna with her aunt Vasari, near Genoa, and had now accompanied her, as we have seen, on her way to England.

The Count and his lady perceived with pleasure and interest the sensation that was shared between Malvina and her lover. They had been already apprised by Melmont of the affection for their niece on the part of his friend—they approved of it; they had even reminded Malvina of the attentions he had paid her abroad, and encouraged the sentiments of attachment she appeared to cherish for Raverton. But none had been so much interested, among the spectators of the meeting above described, as Gustavo and Elvira, who fully sympathised in

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giving away Elvira, and Lord Carlingham performing the same office in the instance of Malvina.

Raverton and his lady lost no time in setting off for his newly-acquired property—on taking which, by the by, it should be mentioned that he was also obliged to change his name, which he was perfectly willing to do on so happy a change, also,—or rather improvement,—of circumstances, for he was not previously wealthy. Gustavo and Elvira were all impatience to be at the beautiful Genoese château, and accordingly set off immediately for the Continent; and the Lentworth party prepared to set off for the hills of Westmoreland. The Count and Countess, and Lord and Lady Carlingham completing the cavalcade. The old family coach (celebrated in the early part of this history) again groaned and creaked, sorely complaining

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from him as from a pestilence, that he shunned with horror. Melmont could now do little else than stare in his face,and show no sign of recognition: and in the same way he felt it was but right to meet the unbidden addresses of many whose friendship was precisely measured—not by the sterling merits of the man, but by the advantages of circumstance that decked him! Such sordidness as this sickened our hero too much to permit him to look upon those he accused of being guilty of it with any thing short of disgust and contempt. Such, indeed, was his contempt, that even if he had recognised these muck-worm miscreants, he never could have kept up any terms of society (not to speak of amity) with them—so it was better to waive all acquaintance with them. As for Cymon, he was (as all mean people are, when they meet with a rebuff from their superiors in station or grade),

racters — drolls, oddities, bores, and quizzes, with whom he had fallen in there! Of Cobb and Fleming he heard no more; of O'Callaghan, mention shall be made anon — at present he inquired of the proprietress of the house, concerning Messrs. Jochabed Grubbins and Holofernes Mogg, and was given to know, that the gentleman whom we designated by the innocent nickname of the "Red Dwarf," (for brevity's sake), had closed a treaty of union for life with a lady of the party, for whom, we may remember his exhibiting sundry symptoms of interest. This lady, whom we took from her "style" and eccentricity for a cracked governess, was perhaps cracked indeed, but turned out not to be a governess, but the widow of an old 'counsellor,' whose death she was said to have accelerated, by plaguing him more than all the causes he had ever wrangled in. We

reply as an acceptance, and led her forthwith to the altar, happy to find he had not misconstrued her. . . . . But what wretched shadow of a man is that which wakes before us, in 'durance vile' confined! Yonder figure we mean, with the high collars drawn up to the projecting cheek-bone, and hiding cheeks hollow with anxiety, and lean from the 'wear aud tear' of disappointed hope and 'short commons' for some time back? Can it be—that we are transplanted within walls of a debtor's gaol! and the wight before us—is it the redoubted O'Callaghan? . . . Alas! it is too true! Echo resounds "O'Callaghan!" How comes it he is here?—the character of the place answering, if Echo doth not! The famous Irish echo would, perhaps, answer, "the bailiffs brought him hither for lack of having his bills honoured!" O'Callaghan, in fact, had paid rather dearly for incurring expenses he was

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his departure from Cheltenham, finding how poor O'Callaghan was situated, after having amused himself and his lady at the expense of the luckless Hibernian, forgot the impertinence of the man in challenging him, and generously went and settled the account for which the poor tyke was then confined. He rode over to Gloucester, and saw Paddy liberated from the durance vile in which he was lodged at that place, as the fashionable county resort for gentlemen whose liberality of speculation has not been so prudently measured by the ength of their purses as it ought to have been. Poor O'Callaghan blushed up to the eyes at being beholden to a person against whom he had been inclined to harbour, very ridiculously, jealousy and dudgeon. His cheeks burned enough to set his high collars on fire, and singe them to tinder. However, this conflagration did not precisely take place; and in lieu of it, the spark of grati-

challenge him, and set himself up as his antagonist, (the thought of which our hero, deservedly, ridiculed,) but in endeavouring to persuade the Hibernian, when he relieved him, that it was on himself, and not on O'Callaghan, that the obligation was conferred! So much it seemed due to state concerning the characters which have figured in the humours of the "Recess."—With respect to those that figure in the loftier parts of the drama,—the priestly Tartuffe, Lanzi, —or the daring swindler, La Marre,—the well rewarded virtue of Elvira,—the dignified and excellent,—the well recompensed suffering of Gustavo—in all these instances we are happy to see that the good are rewarded and the bad punished! This, however, is not always the case,—as in the instance of poor Harvey, and his selfish unnatural father, though he, (if the play on the word may be excused,) was a natural son.—

nature, has often given way to despondence and disease of mind,—in considering evils and shocks of feelings as 'irremediable,' most probably from prejudice, as much as any real feeling or the dictates of nature. How common is the maxim, for instance, that if a man's faith has been pledged to one woman, and she dies, that he is scarcely justifiable in addressing his affections to another,—but this doctrine has been combated, and the dissent justified in the proper discrimination of feeling which led Gustavo to love Elvira, —though he still remembered Fornarina! and again, in the instance of Raverton, who would have been unreasonable had he not loved Malvina, because he had admired and loved Eleanor previously! This circumstance will be remembered in the account of his life given to Melmont, (we can't help still calling him so,) since their college days. On the occasion of that meeting it

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congratulatory,—for he had discovered that a certain property of which he was tenant, was now that of Lord Carlingham! To pass from this specimen of rural disinterestedness, we have nothing to add to the mention of the characters of the foregoing pages; except to observe, *en passant*, that Fleuret had been anxious to follow the good example of his master, and take a wife to himself also; and had fixed his eyes, with that view, on the pretty "genius of *bonbons*," as Melmont had once called her, Fanchette. The wedding took place with due approbation on the part of his master, who told the varlet he knew where to look for a pretty partner, and hoped he had found a good one. "I can answer," he added, "for her discretion," at which piece of praise Fanchette blushed,—the praise was somewhat equivocal, but Fleuret put on it the best construction, though the poor Scapin

The faithful domestic, strange character as he was, shared therefore justly his master's esteem and confidence. "*Perge, perge, nulla mora!*—Tighten that strap, Richard, where are your wits eh? gone wool gathering? set that trunk straight, William,—why, ye helpless scum of earth, I can do more than all of you put together, you idle knaves you!" With such expressions, interlarded as usual with tags of Latin, (which gave those inerudite bumpkins no small notion of his consequence,) did Restamy incite them to forward the arrangement of the baggage, and make the necessary travelling preparations for the expedition. As we have already witnessed his "lord and lady's" departure, we shall say nothing more of this—or of him.

And now to return to the Lentworths. Little Agnes was taken with them to the north, in the same britchka mentioned in our first volume, in

knew no retreat more pleasant than the one they had just left. "Especially," he added, "to wile away that period of relaxation and quiet,—parliamentary or social,—synonymous with the words, 'Out of Town; or, the Recess.'"

END OF VOL. III.

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